

THE STAR
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Window on Jordan

By Lubna Khader
Star Staff Writer
I GUESS that everybody remembers Juliet's famous words when she first met her Romeo, "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Being a "Capulet" or a "Montague" is still one of the vital issues, which affects our life today.

Apart from Shakespeare's western culture, people in the east have similar beliefs regarding the social aspect of names.

The question remains, however, if people are really fond of their names or not. "I like my name very much, and I never thought of changing it," says Fathi Mahmood, a sales representative.

Apparently, it's even worse when you have a name like Wissam. "I hate my name. It sounds so feminine," says Wissam, who is determined on changing it. As a reaction, he wants to adopt a "strange name like Sinar."

"I feel that my name is traditional, and very familiar," says Wafa Kalbounieh, a 24-year-old secretary. And people tend to have their own way of pronouncing different names. Sociologists attribute this to various factors such as values, traditions, the way people are brought up, and sometimes to be ironical, or to mock!

Quite frequently however, mispronunciation is harmless, and used in organizations, institutions or in

schools where there is a large number of people. In such places, Ruba becomes Ruyia, Rashid becomes Rashid Sulaiman becomes Salman, and so on!

You are certain to run into other problems, especially if you have a famous name like Mohammed. You could be mistaken for another colleague or a friend of yours. And people carrying well-known names like Ahmad and Abdullah might prefer to be called by their family names to prevent embarrassing situations.

Names have social values, and these are governed by various factors. Moreover, parents play the main

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Peace deal in trouble on eve of Clinton's trip

Palestinians mark Intifada's 11 anniversary with anti-Israel protests, strikes

By Ghassan Joha
and news agencies
WITH DAYS to go before US President Bill Clinton's visit to the Middle East, Israeli and Palestinian peace-making is again in crisis, with disputes raging over the land-for-security Wye accords.

The Israeli government suspended last week further withdrawals from the West Bank required under the peace deal, and says that Palestinians should be aware of Israel's free choice to release more Palestinian prisoners.

On the other hand, Palestinian officials demanded the release of more political Palestinian prisoners. Israel has only released 250 prisoners out of the 750 it was supposed to set free under the Wye deal.

Palestinians say that Israel has violated the terms of the agreement by not freeing jailed political activists and instead releasing petty criminals.

Israel's latest stand on the issue led most of the 3,500 Palestinian prisoners to begin an open-ended hunger strike. A wave of violence and street demonstrations erupted in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which later turned into clashes with Jewish settlers and Israeli soldiers. One Palestinian was shot dead, he was hit in the chest by Israeli soldiers. More demonstrations are likely to continue as Palestinians celebrate the 11 anniversary of the Intifada.

American diplomats expressed worry, suggesting that even if President Clinton manages to patch things up, the peace deal could easily fall apart after his departure because of the atmosphere of distrust between the two parties.

Netanyahu accuses Palestinian President Yasser Arafat of lying to his people about the latest peace deal, especially the issue of prisoners and other commitments. He said that Israelis "will not be paties on these issues."



Palestinian youth burns an Israeli flag whilst another steps on it during a rally in Gaza marking the 11th anniversary of the Palestinian popular uprising, Intifada against Israeli occupation 9 December.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright reacted fiercely from Brussels and called Netanyahu to stick to the agreement, and live up to his obligations.

And hence, Palestinians moved rapidly on the Wye agreement. On Monday, Palestinian police coordinated its operations with a CIA team and seized more than 200 arms, including Uzis and machineguns, to show good faith on combating terrorism.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) issued a decree last month threatening a six-month jail and \$800 fine for anyone found holding, making, smuggling or selling illegal weapons. But pistols are allowed to be kept.

Turning to the National Charter, the Palestinian National Council (PNC) is expected to amend clauses concerning the destruction of Israel during its special session on Monday 14 December.

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Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Activists differ on Jordan's record; sight violations

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer
HUMAN RIGHTS activists are meeting in Paris to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris. The venue, which started on 7 December under the patronage of President Jack Chirac, will continue till 11 December.

The first declaration of human rights was issued back in December 1948, by the members of the United Nations.

Today, the Declaration is being celebrated all over the world both to recognize the progress that have been made in the human rights field in the last 50 years, and to acknowledge at the same time that more must be done to prevent any human rights violations from taking place.

And in this respect Jordan is

joining the world in the celebration.

Human rights situation in the Kingdom remains controversial. "People are becoming more aware of their rights as human beings and citizens, but there are some violations being committed," Lower House deputy Mohammed Azzaydeh, told *The Star*.

"All in all, our position seems to be promising. Our citizens are living in a safe and secure society," Azzaydeh, who is also the rapporteur of the Public Freedoms Committee, pointed out. However he added, constant pressure must be put on the government to set out more regulations against human rights violations.

Meanwhile, Dr Saeed Abu Meizer, vice president of the Pan Arab Dental Union, said that successive governments used to compare Jordan with

other neighboring or developing countries.

He said it is not fair to compare us to countries with a record on human rights violations, we should be "compared with model examples."

Abu Meizer said that human rights activists in this country have already initiated a debate with government officials over the strict monitoring of human rights violations.

"I believe we are retreating, instead of progressing. It seems that even martial law, which was abolished in 1989, is still implemented these days," Abu Meizer added.

Abu Meizer gave a number of examples which he believes to be as anti-democratic violations of the rights of citizens in particular of expressing their opinion concerning local or international matters.

"For example, Minister of Interior, Nayef Al Qadi,

banned a rally to express popular support for Iraq, a country facing impending US military strikes," Abu Meizer pointed out.

"The minister met with representatives of the political parties and informed them of his refusal, but permitted a 'closed-door festival,'" he said.

However, Abu Meizer said the efforts to rent a hall to carry out the rally was a waste of time. Furthermore, he said the government pressured hall owners not to rent their halls for political activities.

Abu Meizer condemned the attitude of the government expecting such acts to end in public outcries.

"Wheat prices is another example. News about decreasing bread prices became public knowledge, while the government took no steps to lower the price," Abu Meizer continued.

"Not to forget the humiliating manner in which they distribute financial aid. Our citizens are silent so far, unless our voice becomes loud and clear, outrage will sooner or later take place," Abu Meizer warned.

Official work for the defense of human rights started back in 1990, when the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) was established in Amman.

Head of AOHR, Najib Al Rashdan, has already left for Paris to participate in the celebrations.

"I am still not satisfied with the progress of human rights in Jordan," Hani Al Dahleh, Secretary of AOHR said, feeling that the government could do more in the field.

"And there are examples of other human rights violations that include detention without trial among others," he added.

Another violation concerns the situation of inmates in Jordanian prisons. "Our organization made several visits to prisons and many cells were overcrowded."

He pointed out that each prison cell should not have



Famous Syrian actor Doreid Laham at the Haya Cultural Center. Laham, who is the Special Ambassador for UNICEF in Syria has come to Amman, Wednesday, to join in the unveiling of the 1999 report on The State of the World's Children. Laham has also visited a number of youth centers in refugees' camps in Amman, and discussed with the Palestinian children many issues concerning the Palestinian problem, and their aspirations to return to their homeland. Photo by M.Shawkat

UNICEF: Illiteracy dooms one billion to poverty

By John M. Goshko
UNITED NATIONS—ONE BILLION people—nearly one sixth of the humanity—will enter the 21st century doomed to poverty because they are unable to read a book, write their names or master other skills necessary to hold a job, UNICEF reported Tuesday.

The consequences of illiteracy are profound and even potentially life-threatening. For millions and millions of children, education is literally a matter of life and death.

UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy wrote in the agency's annual report on illiteracy, *The State of the World's Children 1999*.

In underdeveloped countries, an estimated 130 million children, about 40

percent of the elementary school age population, either never enter school or drop out, the report says. Of that total, 73 million are girls.

Even in many industrialized countries, 15 percent to 20 percent are functionally illiterate, unable to understand a job application, much less operate a computer or develop other skills necessary to survive in the competitive global economy.

Using statistics from a variety of sources, UNICEF found that children with no basic education will face difficulties that go far beyond supporting themselves and their families. Education is vital in helping people achieve fundamental human rights, such as health, nutrition and safe childbirth, the

report says.

It also says literacy helps people learn to manage conflict and respect diversity in society: "On a society-wide scale, the denial of education harms the cause of democracy and social progress and, by extension, international peace and security."

The goals of expanding access to and improving childhood education, agreed upon at a 1990 world conference, have progressed more slowly than hoped, the report noted. The lag is particularly acute in providing education for girls and women.

Individual national governments hold primary responsibility, the report concludes. While education was declared a human right under the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, "there has not been sufficient political will" in



World REPORT

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he attended by President Clinton, comes in line with the Wye accords. However, the move is encountering strong resistance from Palestinian opposition groups outside the Palestinian territories.

These groups will sponsor later this week a two-day conference in Damascus to reaffirm "Palestinians' rights to build their statehood by force." This move is seen as a direct snub to Yasser Arafat who invited them to attend the PNC meeting in Gaza.

The PLO Executive Committee has called for the reconvening of the PNC to ratify a January 1998 letter from Mr Arafat to President Clinton, confirming that the controversial provisions which call for the destruction of the state of Israel, had already been scrapped.

In accordance to the Wye accord, the PNC must convene before the second of three Israeli pullbacks, to affirm the letter. However, Israel's interpretation of the agreement is different. It wants more explicit guarantees.

Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon warned that there would be a bloodbath if Arafat goes ahead and declares a Palestinian independent state next May.

On the other hand Israeli President Ezer Weizman

urged Clinton to resume his peace mediation, hoping to move what he called the "cart out of the mud."

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said that Palestinians will coform with the Wye accords as much as they can, and in a way so as not to provide Netanyahu with an excuse to stop the implementation.

The PNC session comes days before President Clinton's 12-15 December visit to Israel and the PNA territories. Palestinians are delighted at the prospect of the visit, and hope to use it to their favor. Israel, for its part, stresses that Clinton's visit to the Gaza Strip should be held without the trappings of statehood.

The US Administration has repeatedly said the trip is not intended as an endorsement of Palestinian aspirations for statehood. US Middle East envoy Dennis Ross spent the past few days preparing for Clinton's visit and narrowing the gap between Palestinian and Israeli differences. He was faced with opposing views on the issue of security and the cracking down on terrorism.

News of the upcoming visit has created much consternation for Netanyahu. He spent the last seven days negotiating with his ex-ally David Levy to persuade him to re-

join the government.

Israeli government survived last Monday an expected collapse, following a decision made by the Knesset to postpone a vote of confidence. Political analysts confirmed that the opposition Labor Party, possessing a 61-vote majority in parliament, was persuaded by the government to hold off the vote till after Clinton's visit.

Netanyahu still faces problems with members of his coalition who are threatening to walk out of the government. David Levy has rejected Netanyahu's overtures to join the cabinet.

The former foreign minister pointed out that the reason for his resignation from the government—slowdown in the peace process, and economic policy—have not been readressed.

President Clinton showed his equanimity last week, when he decided to spend the first day of his visit (Sunday) in Jerusalem and then to tour the Palestinian territories of the Gaza Strip and West Bank city of Bethlehem before leaving home. Netanyahu showed his resentment and argued that Clinton's visit to Gaza would be seen as an implicit recognition of a Palestinian state. ■

Changes to Palestinian Charter provoke strong reactions

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previous agreements and ensured American insistence for the Palestinians and Israelis to reach mutual understanding," Rfou told *The Star*.

However, there are certainly different points of views. "Regardless of what happened in 1996, we believe that amending the Charter is a big mistake," said Dr Saeed Thyab, general secretary of the Jordanian Popular Unity Party (JPUP).

According to Thyab, the negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians just serve Israeli interests.

"Netanyahu believes that any Israeli government has the right to reconsider and revise any agreement signed by previous Israeli governments," Thyab continued.

"The Charter is a national reference to the Palestinian nation which represents their identity and is a main factor for their unity," he said. "They will even change the first article which states that Palestine is part of the Arab world, since Israelis claim that it incites Palestinians against them." The general secretary believes that the amendments will create a new form of the Charter which will result in canceling any article that even mentions Israel.

Palestinian opposition parties are boycotting the meeting. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have categorically stated that they will not attend under any terms.

Jamil Majdalawi, member of the Political Bureau of the Popular Front described the session as a way of 'slaughtering the Charter to please Netanyahu'. Majdalawi explained that "this slaughter complies with the Israeli instructions imposed at Wye River."

Palestinian opposition groups are meeting in Damascus on Saturday 12 December to counter Arafat's plan to amend the Charter. ■

EU envoy says peace needs good faith

AMMAN (Star)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent received the European Union special peace envoy Miguel Moratinos who is on three-day visit to the region. He also met Prime Minister Faysal Al Tarawneh in the presence of Foreign Minister Abdel Ilah Al Khathib.

The two sides reviewed the latest developments in the peace process and the European role in supporting peace in the region.

In a special interview with *Ad Dustour* Arabic daily and *The Star* he said the European Union is fully committed to the peace process, and is urging all parties, Israeli and Palestinians to move forward on the peace tracks.

"The EU is calling on all parties to implement the peace deal and not to put any conditions beyond the Wye agreement." He added that both sides have to work in good faith and in good spirit. "He emphasized that what has been absent in the past two years 'is the lack of confidence and strength between the two parties, and I think the EU and the United States can put an added value', because without trust is very difficult to build a sound environment that would lead the negotiations to pro-



Moratinos

ceeded in good faith."

Mr Moratinos rejected the view made by some that Europe is marginal to the peace process. On the contrary, he said "Europe has already injected into the peace process an important element of survival. Without Europe there would have been no possibility even to talk about negotiation." He said that Europe has contributed a great deal in aid to the development of Palestinian infrastructure, and that this has strengthened their negotiating position. He said that "we have to realize that our economic

role will benefit the political results of the negotiations." Moratinos added that the European wants to push the peace process on all tracks, and not just the Palestinian-Israeli track. He pointed out what is also necessary is to move on the Israeli-Lebanese track and on the Syrian-Israeli track. Moratinos said that while Arab public opinion may not realize the extent of European involvement in the peace process, "Europe must explain better what can be done [in terms of] priorities and commitments." ■

Activists differ on Jordan's record; sight violations

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more than four inmates. "Today, we have cells that have at least 10. Prisoners run into many difficulties, meeting with their lawyers which can be a real problem despite the fact that it is their constitutional right to meet their lawyers, free from any bureaucratic hardship," said Al Dahleh.

However Al Dahleh does recognize that Jordan has made

major strides in the human rights field compared to many other countries of the region, believing that Jordan is at least moving ahead with introducing amendments to existing laws concerning human rights. Yet he points out that the democratic process is yet to be fully mobilized especially in those areas concerning public liberties.

"I believe that the most dangerous violation in terms of human rights in Jordan is the

one-man, one-vote election law," Nazih Ammarin, a Lower House deputy told *The Star*. "This law enables tribes, which represent five percent of the Jordanian population, to monopolize the seats of Parliament," Ammarin added.

"This electoral system limits Parliamentary access and deprives the majority of citizens from exercising their rights on the council's agenda," Ammarin stressed.

At the Paris gathering, an international declaration will be issued calling on governments to introduce more protective measures to support human rights activists in their struggle for freedom and justice. ■

What's in a name?!

Continued from page 1

role of giving names. "My parents chose to name me Gazaleh! I turn red whenever someone mentions my name," complained Gazaleh Hamdan, a university student. A strange name like Gazaleh can be the subject of many humorous remarks.

There is nothing wrong with its meaning, but the expression is ambiguous to many. Others name their children after famous figures, "I was named after the Egyptian leader Jamal Abdel Naser. My father admired this character very much," says salesman Jamal Al Rihawi.

Meanwhile, Rasmi Al Bana hates his name. "My name means 'formal', and that is why my colleagues find it a way to

poke fun at," Al Bana bitterly said.

The case is different with inherited names, no matter what it refers to, some families are somehow obliged to repeat particular names.

"Although I was against the idea, my husband insisted on naming our first son after his father's," said Umm Yousef Al Atweh.

Dr Mohammed Khraisat, head of the History Department at Jordan University, pointed out that names and their meanings are related to economic and social circumstances, since most of our names are derived from our own social and local environment.

"Names of famous figures can dominate certain societies at certain times," Khraisat

added. Names such as Abdel Hamid and Abdel Majeed, were the result of the influence of the Ottoman Empire in the region. These were the names of Sultans.

Another example could be applied to feminine names. Khadeejah and Aishah were very familiar in the past. They are the names of prophet Mohammed's wives.

Today, it is the period of "fast-names," with easy pronunciations and meanings, like Rana, Rasha, Shadi and Sami. All in all, names will always play a major role in determining our relations with others, especially when it comes to social and psychological factors. Moreover, they remain a familiar social code which must be respected in the long run. ■

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Alo surges ahead

■ On the first anniversary of its operation in the Kingdom, the Trans-Jordan for Communication Services Company (ALO) held last week a press conference in Radisson SAS Hotel, to review its work during the past year.

Shadi Al Majali, ALO's general manager, told the audience that over 2560 public telephone sets are operating in the country, covering all the 11 governorates. He emphasized that ALO hopes to increase the number to 7000 sets. The Greater Amman area alone includes nearly 2000 telephone sets.

Briefing the audience on its future plans, Mr Majali said that ALO will offer its clients the chance to use VISA cards in their calls. The new service, due to begin by next week, aims to facilitate services for foreign tourists and visitors.

Mr Majali said that ALO is owned by three companies, two Greek companies and a Jordanian. He added that the company uses highly developed technology that conforms with the Greek operational services. He stressed that ALO



General Manager Shadi Al Majali at the press conference

will soon operate the new GSM system for mobiles in the country. Mr Majali revealed that the company won recently a Yemen tender to form a public telephone network there.

He concluded that the company faces difficulties in its operations, manifested in damaging and abusing the telephone sets, which has so far has cost the company over JD 185,000. ■

Britain promises more economic support

AMMAN (Petra)—British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions Alan Meale, said Monday that Britain will continue its political and economic support to Jordan. The minister stressed on the wise leadership of Jordan who has been able to accomplish political stability and provide investment opportunities which made it an investment attraction country.

Mr Meale added in an interview with Petra that Jordan's good relations with its neighbors, the availability of highly trained and educated human resources coupled with cheap labour and low percentage of inflation, as well as Jordan's signing of the partnership agreement with the European Union, made it a regional choice for businessmen seeking investment opportunities in the Middle East and compensated it for its scarce natural resources. Mr Meale heads a

14-member British delegation that represents top British water companies that participated in a one-day seminar on water issues. The minister stressed that Jordan has been able to accomplish a good growth rate in the last few years, particularly during the first years of the '90s.

The British delegation is currently in a tour that includes Syria and Lebanon in addition to Jordan to enhance cooperation in the field of water. Britain, Mr Meale said, is ready to cooperate with the three countries in the field of searching for and maintaining water resources, their distribution, management and preparations of the necessary infrastructure of water projects.

The peace process and the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty motivated a number of foreign businessmen to seek investments in Jordan, Mr Meale said. ■



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A Message

TRIPOLI (Petra)—Libyan leader Moammar Qadhafi received on Sunday His Royal Prince Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein, who conveyed to him a message from His Majesty King Hussein congratulating President Qadhafi on his recovery from a surgery, after he was injured in his hip while doing some exercises. In his message, the King stressed Jordan's support for Libya to confront the unjust measures imposed on the country. Jordan would continue to "exert its efforts until these unjust measures are lifted," the King said. The King wished President Qadhafi continued good health and happiness, and the Libyan people further progress and prosperity.

Nature

AMMAN (Petra)—Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Michael Molloy praised the progress Jordan has achieved in the field of nature conservation. He stressed that Jordan attaches special attention to this issue and that this was evident in his visits to a number of natural reserves which were established by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). The remarks came during a meeting with Director of Supply and Public Relations at the RSCN, Mrs Salma Attieh. Mrs Attieh said that she discussed with the Canadian Ambassador means to promote ties of cooperation between the two sides. "The ambassador expressed interest in supporting the society's projects and affirmed the importance of implementing them with a view to preserve nature," she noted.

Agriculture

AMMAN (Petra)—Minister of Agriculture Mejlum Khreisha met on Monday with the visiting European Union's (EU) Mission entrusted in promoting food security programs. Khreisha stressed his ministry's keenness to expand productive projects and agricultural lands with a view to double food production and improve the standards of living of citizens with limited income.

He also voiced the agriculture ministry's interest to increase cooperation with the European Union and benefit from its scientific and technological experience to achieve a qualitative leap in the agricultural sector. The visit comes within the approach of International Food Summit to increase support to food security programs and examine possibilities financing various projects in Jordan.

World Bank in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra)—A World Bank (WB) delegation currently on a visit to the Kingdom, held a meeting on Monday with representatives of various ministries, government departments and the private sector. During the meeting, the WB's Purchases specialist Pamela Peagart said that the delegation will look into Jordan's laws relating to the government's purchases. She expressed the delegation's desire to deal with the concerned officials in the public and private sectors to get acquainted with the advantages and disadvantages of government purchases. "Through our joint action, we could come up with ideas and working plans to activate procedures relating to government purchases," Mrs Peagart pointed out. She said that the delegation will prepare at the end of its visit a report on government purchases which will be included in the strategy of aid provided in Jordan by the World Bank. "This will determine the kind of projects and activities which will be carried out by the WB in Jordan," she noted.

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

Going into cyberspace

The Press and Publication Dep't of the Ministry of Information is going into cyberspace. At last, it's taking its place on the Internet and developing its website. PPD Director-General Iyad Qattan said his department is now taking all the necessary technical arrangements to put all the material concerning press and publications on the website. He added that starting from next year, the PPD will be fully linked with Ministry of Information to provide a wider Internet infrastructure of information.



Qattan

Doctors

Jordan Medical Association's (JMA) President, Bassem Al Dajani, said that his Association have played a critical role in the freeing of an Irbid eye doctor who was taken into court custody. The doctor, who was ordered to be locked up in one of the correction centers in Irbid after a private complaint, was released on bail. Dajani said that it was not right to order custody after a complaint. These things have to go through the proper channels. He added that his organization is just as keen to protect its members as it is to protect private citizens. The doctor, who is to be investigated, was taken into custody last Thursday after a lawsuit was made against him by a parent whose daughter had an eye laser surgery few months ago. But it seems the JMA is making a strong stand. Dajani said that this is not the first case, arguing that the courts have long stopped doctors before an investigative committee was formed to present its findings, and adding that it is becoming a "disturbing phenomena." On another issue, the JMA is calling once again on doctors to pay their dues to the Association. There are still 500 doctors who have not paid.

Campaign to free Jordanian prisoners in Syria
The issue of the Jordanian prisoners held in Syrian jails is still very much alive. Now it is coming from the prisoners themselves as 99 Jordanian inmates have called on the government to intervene on their behalf. Detailed memorandums are presently held by the Families Prisoners Committees. The families have said that their sons are living under terrible conditions. Meanwhile, Amnesty International (AI) started gathering information regarding Jordanian prisoners in Syria to campaign for their release. AI representative Abdel Salam Ahmad said Sunday, AI is concerned with human rights violations, and it is launching international campaigns to release prisoners of conscience, and political prisoners. It also works to gather information about past prisons and fighting torture.

Dialogue to 100th
In a surprise move, or not so surprising as the case maybe, Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Tarawneh met the Overseer of the Muslim Brotherhood and the General Secretary of the Islamic Action Front, Abdel Latif Arabyat earlier this week. It was suggested that the meeting went very well having discussed the state of political parties, the relation between parties and the government and public freedoms. The two Islamic leaders later met the Minister of Interior Naif Al Qadi. The meetings came in light of the national dialogue that was initiated by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan.

100 days

It has become traditional for the Center of Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan to hold polls on government policies. This time it's no different. The Center just completed a latest poll on the first 100 days of the so-called opinion leaders and national sample were asked about the performance of the government. The first question was whether the government was able to carry out their responsibilities "to a high degree". About 26 percent of the opinion leaders sample thought otherwise, but 22 percent of the national sample were positive. On the whole, the results show that about 43 percent of the national sample thought that the government was able to carry out its agenda but to a much lower degree. However, 53 percent of the same sample said the government performed badly.

Bazaar at Marriott

UNDER THE patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Challenged will organize a bazaar on Tuesday 15 December at the Marriott Hotel. Awatef Khouri, a member of the Board of Directors of Al Hussein Society said that the bazaar is held on every year and has been going for the last 25 years. "The bazaar has tremendously developed since then. We have a wider participation from Arab and foreign

embassies and other international organizations in the country," Khouri added. Items displayed at the bazaar include handicrafts, gift items, Christmas decorations and others. Revenues from the bazaar will support the different projects of the Al Hussein Society. "Mothers and Children" is the latest project of the Society. The project aims at rehabilitating women to take care of themselves and their children.

UNICEF: Illiteracy dooms one billion to poverty

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many countries to make the necessary investment of money and effort, it says. "To achieve education for all children, the world would need to spend an additional \$7 billion a year over the next 10 years," the report notes. "This is less than is annually spent on cosmetics in the United States or on ice cream in Europe." Among Third World countries, the report finds that the greatest improvements during the last 10 years in Latin America and Asia. But even in these areas, vast disparities remain between haves and have nots.

The report cites isolated "bright spots" where innovative efforts are being made to expand literacy. In the Philippines, itinerant teachers "lug" backpacks over rugged terrain to bring classes to children in isolated provinces. In Cambodia, teachers from different villages share materials. And in many countries—among them Nepal, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic—efforts are being made to expand teaching over the radio.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

By Saman Abu Sharar
Star Staff Writer

IN 1995, 54 percent of surveyed women in Costa Rica, 59 percent in Japan, 29 percent in the United States and 25 percent in Canada said to have been subjected to violence by a spouse or a partner.

However, in Jordan, it is difficult to obtain statistics of violence against women. The words of His Majesty the King to Parliament recently has focused public attention on this issue. "We should pay serious attention to the dangerous phenomenon of marital violence, which is the source of suffering for women. It also constitutes a violation of their basic rights," said King Hussein.

Eleven countries in the region are working hard to eradicate the problem of domestic violence by signing an agreement to eliminate violence and discrimination against women through a program run by the United Nations Agency (UNIFEM). It is hoped that this would change the situation of victims of marital violence in the coming years. The campaign "A Life Free of Violence. It is our Right" was organized by UNIFEM and officially launched by HRH Princess Basma late last month.

Three women tell their stories

"I did not want to marry him because I knew he drank heavily and acted like a child, but I was forced by my family," says Kifah, who was forced to marry against her will. She became the wife of a man who started beating her from the first days of their marriage.

"The first time he beat me was when he was taking a bath. I refused to rub his body because I was shy," the 25-year-old woman says.

Kifah later took refuge in her brother's house because the beatings continued. However, she was forced to return to her husband by her family because she was pregnant. But her husband became more aggressive, and right after delivery, Kifah decided to leave her husband for good to save her life and the life of her little child.

"My life with him became very painful. He used to beat me every time he laid eyes on me, and when I asked him why he did that, he would say that he was free to do what he pleases with me," Kifah says bitterly.

Not only would he beat her with his bare hands, but he would also do so with kitchen utensils and by throwing chairs at her.

Today, Kifah lives with her four-year-old boy at her mother's house, waiting for her divorce. "I now work as a beautician to earn a living and support my son," explains the proud woman.

But what does the future hold for Kifah and her son? Currently, and without the divorce, she does not receive child support from her husband. Once she is divorced and decides to remarry, she will automatically lose the right to keep her child. And if she stays single, she will simply be seen as a divorced woman in the eyes of society.

Maha, on the other hand, is a 34-year-old woman with five children, the eldest is 16 and the youngest is three months old. Compared to Kifah, Maha is more reserved when speaking about her husband. She explains that he is a good man, generally kind, "but only beats me from time to time."

"Sometimes, I do not understand why he beats me. If he is punishing me for something bad that I did, I would understand," Maha says timidly. "Once, when he was unemployed, I asked him to look for a job, he became so furious, he beat me with a stick on my head. If it was not for the neighbors, I don't know what would have happened," adds the young woman.

Maha was often tempted to complain to the authorities about her husband's abuse, but changed her mind at the last minute. "The only time I dared to leave was when I left to my



Three ways to break the cycle of violence:

Victims of marital violence who need to talk to experts and break the silence can do this by calling one of the following associations:

- The 'Hotline': a program of Jordanian Women Union, ☎ 5675729
- The Family Unit Protection: a program launched by the government, ☎ 5633349/5623345
- Mizan (A legal group for human rights): a program run by lawyer Asma Khader for legal advice, ☎ 4623773

the legal system.

The 'Hotline' is a program set up by the Jordanian Women Union in 1994 to fight marital violence, and allow women in the Kingdom to take their first step towards breaking away from the cycle of abuse.

The program has a three-step approach. The first step is a phone call with the victim, the second is following the case up in one of the available centers in Amman, Bap'a and Zarqa. And the third is by sending program experts to visit the victim at home. This is only done in cases of extreme brutality which might endanger the life of a woman.

"The 'Hotline' allows women to call us without any kind of pressure. We do not ask them for any personal information to make them feel at ease and secure," says Afaf Al Jaberi, a social researcher with the program. The 'Hotline' is an alternative solution for women from going to the police station where they might feel uneasy.

The program receives calls from women all over Jordan. These are made mostly in the mornings while their husbands are at work. "In 1996, we received around seven calls per day. In 1997, the number reached 12 calls per day, and since May 1998, we receive at least 15 calls per day," adds Al Jaberi.

According to the researcher, the program can not follow up on all the cases because some women call once just to complain. "Personal will is essential because without the cooperation of the victim, we can do absolutely nothing. Only in cases of extreme brutality we react quickly. We take her to the hospital for a medical report, and then to the police station for an official report. We then try to find her a place to stay," she explains.

The lack of a public shelter for battered women, paralyzes all con-

cerned parties who want to fight marital violence.

"Sometimes in emergency cases, we bring a woman to our home until we can find a permanent solution," says Al Jaberi. However, the goal of the 'Hotline' is not to encourage the victim to auto-

matically leave her husband, but to attempt to put "a finger" on the core of the problem to find a solution. According to Al Jaberi most women don't want to leave their husbands, but they want the violence to stop. "It is only in cases of extreme brutality that we encourage the woman to leave her husband," she adds. Experts on the program sometimes receive the whole family in an attempt to solve the problem. But according to the researcher, women in general are scared to speak out.

"In the majority of cases, women do not want to go to the hospital for a medical report nor to the police station for a police report. But without these two reports they can prove absolutely nothing," Al Jaberi says.

Breaking the silence demonstrates a lot of courage for a woman. Lawyer and human rights activist Asma Khader says that stopping the violence is a long and complicated process because in the majority of cases, these women find themselves alone without the support of anyone. Despite this, Khader believes that any woman who is subjected to violence should act fast before it is too late. "I know a woman who was battered by her husband for 25 years, few months ago she was literally butchered by her husband," she explains.

Khader admits that men in Jordan have more legal tools to their advantage than women. These include the right to divorce, remarriage, travel without the consent of anyone, etc. Recently, a law was issued allowing women to travel without the consent of their husbands. "A man can easily divorce his wife if she starts complaining, while she can do absolutely nothing," affirms Khader. She admits that there are loopholes in the law but it should not stop women from officially complaining.

Punishments vary from three months to three years depending on the nature of brutality. In cases of attempted murder, the punishment is much more severe. But according to Khader, the most difficult is to prove the identity of the aggressor, since this takes place behind closed doors. "Even if a woman presents a medical report to the court indicating that she is a victim of violence, it does not prove the identity of the aggressor. If there are no witnesses, it is her word against his," explains the lawyer. Judgments in cases of marital violence may take years.

According to Khader, during the legal process, women are subjected to important psychological pressure from the husband to specifically, if they are still living together, the children, her family, her in-laws and society at large. "Society and the legal system do not treat her as a victim but as someone who is complaining about a member of her family," Khader points out.

"A woman has to go to the police station, and if she can not do so, she has to understand why she can not do so. If, for example, it is for financial reasons, then she has to find a way to become less dependent on her husband financially so that she can say no tomorrow," the lawyer concludes.

Doctor Hani Jahshan, forensic examiner at the National Institute of Forensic Medicine, receives between 30 to 50 cases of battered women every month. "This figure is not at all representative of reality, since only a small minority of women have the courage to officially complain," he says. A battered woman has two possibilities to officially complain against her aggressor. She can either go to the police station or to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine. "Our role is limited to giving a report concerning the medical status of the battered woman in which we indicate the possible physical and psychological danger the victim is exposed to," explains Dr. Jahshan who also works with the Family Protection Unit.

The unit, opened a year and a half ago by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, receives abused women and children. Dr. Jahshan emphasizes that the lack of a shelter limits the work of all parties in this field. "I received a woman who was whipped 128 times by her husband. I was paralyzed and did not know what to do because there is no shelter she can go to," Dr. Jahshan says. Because of the brutality of this particular case, the woman has received help from the Jordanian Women Union and the government to rent an apartment for her and her children. Despite this, the woman is still in fear. Her husband, serving a short-term sentence, has threatened to kill her when he gets out.

Dr. Jahshan explains that his institute only started giving medical reports to be used by the victim since 1990. Before, all similar cases were registered as simple marital disputes between two members of the family.

Today, all experts agree that to start fighting this phenomena, women have to first be informed of their right to live without being subjected to violence by their spouses. Secondly, it is necessary to assist these women in becoming less dependent on their husbands. Thirdly, society has to be informed of the cruelty of such an action, whether through the media or school curriculums. Lastly, issuing new laws that are in favor of the victim.

(1) Source: Fact Sheet on "Domestic Violence Against Women: Health & Development Policy Project, Washington, DC, 1998; United Nations, The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics, New York, NY: United Nations, 1995; from a study "Safe and Secure: Eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls in Muslim Societies" prepared by Sister in Global Institute (SIGI).

Kais opens new branch in Amman



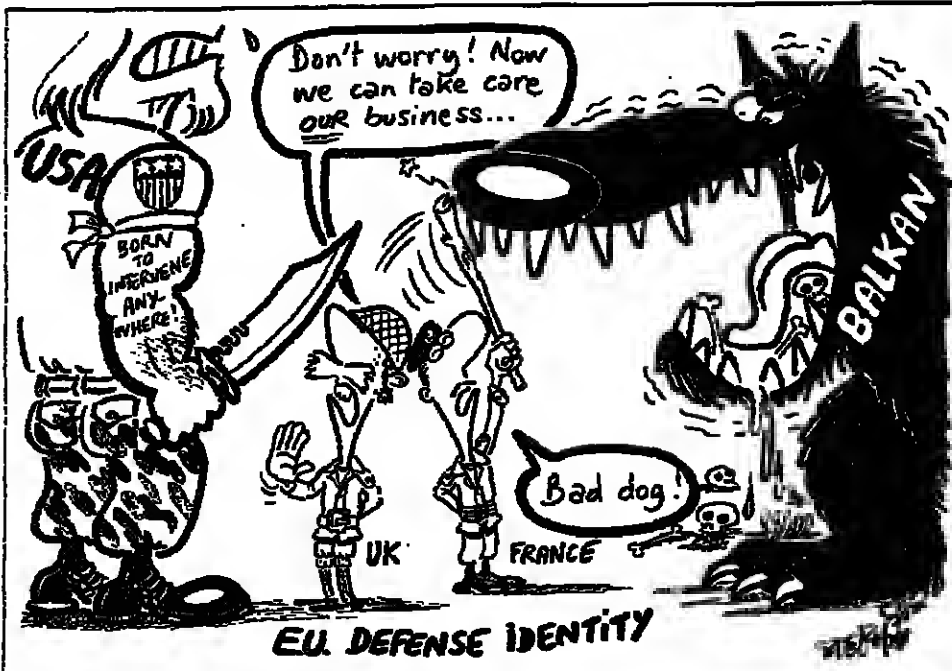
A new branch for Kais Center for Quick Services was opened in Amman on 8 December. Haider Murad, head of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, inaugurated the opening. This is Kais's sixth branch. The other five branches are located in the Safeway Supermarket, the Airport highway branch, in the Housing Bank Complex, Jabal Al Hussein, and in Dabiyat Al Rawda. However, the main branch is in the Jaber Commercial Complex in Mecca Street. The Kais Center provides many services to its clients, ranging from dry clean, patching clothes, repairing shoes, coloring leather, latching keys, and inscribing letters.

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Our Say...

Clinton's precarious peace mission

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton arrives to Israel and the Palestinian territories next week to find the peace deal he helped broker less than two months ago on the brink of collapse. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under pressure from his right-wing coalition partners to drop the land-for-security deal with the Palestinians, has suspended implementation of the Wye River agreement. He is presiding over a divided government whose fate, and ultimately that of Netanyahu himself, now hangs in the balance. To buy himself some time as he struggles to emerge from political chaos, he is shifting the pressure to the Palestinians. Now he is demanding that the Palestinian leadership halt what he calls as incitement, amend the National Charter and drop plans to declare an independent state next May. Since the signing of the Wye agreement in the White House in October, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has been honoring his obligations in spite of Israeli obstacles and mounting dissent within his own ranks. The Palestine National Council (PNC) will hold a historic meeting in the presence of President Clinton in Gaza and is expected to drop clauses in the National Charter, adopted in 1964, calling for the destruction of Israel. What more should the Israelis want?

The United States has insisted that Israel must meet its commitments under the deal and refrain from introducing new conditions. But a weakened Netanyahu is finding it extremely difficult to appease both the Americans and his hardline coalition partners. Political observers believe the present government is doomed no matter what Netanyahu tries to do. The elusive Netanyahu will have to make a choice soon and bear the brunt of his decision.

Netanyahu cannot expect the Palestinians to carry the blame for his own failed policies. He is in no position to demand that the Palestinians drop plans to declare their state when he is in fact using every opportunity to renege on his obligations. He should not blame the Palestinians when his fanatic foreign minister, Ariel Sharon, makes reckless statements calling on Jewish settlers to grab Palestinian lands and threatening to annex the West Bank if Arafat declares his state.

It is obvious that Israeli commitment to its agreements with the Palestinians will have to be carried through if the Middle East peace process is to be served. The United States is sending a clear message to Israeli leaders that there could be no turning back and that the Israeli premier will have to make a choice.

President Clinton will have an uneasy time trying to pin down Netanyahu, who must be weighing his options carefully as he ponders his political future. If he chooses to turn his back on his obligations then the peace deal will be sucked into the vortex of Israel's political turmoil. For the Palestinians, President Clinton will be the first US leader to set foot on liberated Palestinian territory. No matter how the Israelis try to belittle the symbolism that surrounds this visit, the fact is it will be considered as an important step towards the ultimate goal of peace-making in the Middle East, which is the creation of a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel.



Khamis Abu Sal dries posters of US President Bill Clinton in his printshop in the Gaza Strip 8 December. Clinton is due to visit the Palestinian-ruled areas on 14 December to support the US-brokered Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement. Palestinians welcome Clinton's visit as a symbol of supporting their sovereignty. Reuters

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Bir Zeit University

A civil society in the making

By Edward Said

HAVING returned from a trip to attend an academic conference at Bir Zeit University on the West Bank it seemed to me important to report on what, after an absence from Palestine of about six months, I saw and was impressed with. In the immediate aftermath of the Wye agreement I encountered no enthusiasm or surprise, just a kind of resigned but doubtless simmering anger that so many of our rights as a people had once again been handed away.

If there were to be prizes for unpopularity surely Arafat's supreme team of negotiators must rank very high on the list. The notion that the CIA was to be the arbiter in matters of dispute between the Palestinian Authority and Netanyahu's government struck everyone I spoke to as perhaps the final irony. As for the established political class, its notables, middle-aged functionaries and the like, there was a great sense of indifference expressed by literally everyone I spoke to, as there was with all the political parties and currents. The landscape was dotted with new settlements, especially the hilltops; while I was there General Sharon had enjoined the settlers to seize what they could and of course, with the Israeli army to help them, they did. The most striking physical change observed since I was there was the increase in the number and size of the bypassing roads, which are to be seen everywhere I went, cutting through the West Bank and the Jerusalem area, surrounding, punctuating, and of course destroying Palestinian land.

The idea behind them is clear to see: to inhibit, if not actually to totally prevent the emergence of any Palestinian polity, despite Arafat's repeated threats to declare statehood. Most people greet his announcements about declaring statehood with considerable, albeit bitter, mirth. Where there is considerable room for optimism is in the fact that institutions - in civil society - those that have little to do directly with the Authority or the Israeli occupation - press on despite the grim encirclement all round.

I have in mind one of these, Bir Zeit University, where I and a large number of academic participants spent the better part of a week deeply involved in research papers, discussions and lively exchange on the subject of Palestinian landscape, a topic of extraordinary interest given the history of many invading civilizations in Palestine of which the Zionist is the latest, the ugliest physically and the most invasive. What struck me is that if there is any hope for the future it is in such national institutions as Bir Zeit which under tremendous pressures and remarkable odds still functions, often brilliantly and always sensibly.

Founded in 1924 as a girls' boarding school, the institution has always been associated with the Nasir family, whose senior member Butros Nasir and his sister Nabila were the school's founders and earliest mentors. I remember Butros from my childhood: one of my aunts was his cousin and we knew the family - they in the village of Bir Zeit, about 10 kilometers from Ramallah, we in Jerusalem -

quite well. Butros was a civil servant who later became Foreign Minister of Jordan in 1960. His oldest son Hanna, an AUB graduate and Purdue PhD in physics is now president. In 1926 Bir Zeit School became a coeducational secondary school which some of my cousins attended, and whom I recall visiting as a child in the mid-1940s.

Between 1952 and 1960 a freshman year was added to the school; thus, students could get one additional year of university along with the four secondary school years; this was followed between 1962 and 1967 with the addition of a second (or sophomore) university year. Five years after the Israeli occupation



Said

of 1967, during the graduation ceremonies of 1972, Hanna Nasir announced that Bir Zeit would become a university, i.e. an institution offering a four year course leading to the BA. The next day a member of the Israeli military authorities visited him and was told that such an intention was "illegal" and tried to restrict the institution from implementing it. A whole series of threats from the Israeli military followed the announcement. In 1974 Nasir himself was deported for "incitement against the security of Israel," a ludicrously inappropriate charge, but one entirely in keeping with Israel's policy against the emergence of any Palestinian civil life. Blindfolded, he was summarily taken to the Lebanese border, from which he went to Amman and remained there in exile until 1994.

Gaby Baranki, a professor of chemistry ran the University, while Hanna directed it from Jordan. When the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem tried to intervene with the Israeli authorities he wasn't allowed to see "Nasir's file." And to bring matters up to date the university was entirely closed under General Yitzhak Rabin's orders between 1988 and 1992, the intifada years. No other occupation regime in history declared war against educational institutions except Israel's, and still the country is celebrated for its "benign" occupation, which continues apace during the "peace process."

The sheer survival of Bir Zeit is of course one of the many stories of Palestinian resistance against outright Israeli oppression. In my opinion, that survival acquires added importance in the present because the political horizons are so bleak, and therefore the development of civil institutions, whose purpose is Palestinian development, the preservation of a vibrant national culture and identity, and the continued deepening of roots in the land of Palestine, is of the first importance as well as a safeguard against the fate of turning Palestinians into Red Indians being prepared for by the US and Israel and to a great extent also by our uncomprehending and corrupt leadership whose main goal is its own survival and personal prosperity. Bir Zeit has expanded as a university over the past 20 years. It

now has a student body of about 4000 men and women from all parts of the West Bank and, when they are allowed to travel there from Gaza. In addition to the BA, the university offers MA's in international studies, education, economics, modern Arabic studies, water engineering, law and health education. Its curriculum is an entirely liberal and secular one, even though a simmering dispute between those ideals and some of the Islamist students on the campus continues.

What I have found admirable is that Bir Zeit, which is one of eight universities on the West Bank and Gaza, sees itself, and is seen by others, as the national Palestinian university. This is by no means to denigrate or lessen the importance of Al Najah in Nablus, for instance, or any of the Gaza universities: it is to say, however, that Bir Zeit alone has both the national and international reputation of representing Palestinian national life through education. Not that its life isn't a hard one. Bir Zeit is a village, which means that Israeli roadblocks can and often do interrupt students and faculty coming from Ramallah, and elsewhere in Area A.

Occasionally Israeli soldiers make their way onto the campus, and make arrests, break a few bones, then leave. Yet the university's physical setting is more impressive every time I see it. A large number of handsome white stone buildings dot the gently rolling hillsides just above the village of Bir Zeit: there is a campus of quite substantial size, the land donated to the university by the Nasir family, all of the buildings the result of donations from wealthy Palestinian expatriates.

Thus our conference, for instance, took place in Kamal Nasir Hall - the university's main auditorium built in memory of Kamal Nasir, a poet and PLO spokesman assassinated in Beirut in 1973 by an Israeli hit-team headed, it is widely believed, by none other than Ehud Barak, the present head of the Labour Party - whose main beneficiaries are Abdel Mohsin and Leila Qattan, a remarkable (and remarkably successful) couple who have used their considerable wealth to benefit their people in such unprecedented ways. Such buildings as the new library, the engineering school,

the recent college of business are similarly the gifts of wealthy diaspora Palestinians, who have turned to Bir Zeit the way many years ago prominent diaspora Jews promoted and funded the Hebrew University, well before Israel's establishment in 1948.

Despite acts of individual generosity, Bir Zeit's graduates are very far from wealthy, and so the budgetary problems are immense. Bir Zeit has an annual budget of 12 million dollars, a little over half comes from tuition and from the Palestinian Authority; the rest has to be raised, mostly by Hanna Nasir, with results that are mixed. At least several times in the past few years there hasn't been money for faculty salaries, and library

acquisitions have dropped to near zero (1,000 new books in the past three years). Life is hard, as tough because the confinements and dispossession imposed by Israel on Palestinians are hard, as because with no Palestinian state as yet in existence, the local and regional economy in terrible shape, with most Palestinians in dire financial straits, donations to universities are given low priority.

Still, what is very impressive is that on campus at Bir Zeit there is an open and free exchange of ideas and opinions that simply doesn't exist anywhere else in the Arab world. Nasir and his colleagues are understandably proud of this, and very anxious to preserve it. Criticism of individuals and policies thrives, as does a boisterous debate between the adherents of different political parties. When Arafat's Authority arrested some students two years ago, Bir Zeit took the Authority to court and got the students released. One hears a lot of complaining at the university, but the amazing thing from my point of view is that an individual like Hanna Nasir, a large number of old and irascible obstacles.

One reason why this is so, I think, is that even though the Nasir family founded it and is still involved in running it, Bir Zeit is not a family institution but in the minds of everyone associated with it as student, administrator or faculty, it is a public, national one. There is little of this sort of sentiment and activity in the Arab world except for such places as the American University of Beirut which, after all, is an American not a national or Arab institution. Bir Zeit's Board of Trustees is made up of 16 individuals from the West Bank and Gaza; their problems as Palestinians are also the university's. Many of the territories' most prominent names, from Hanan Ashrawi to Ali Jawari and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, three of the best-known Palestinian intellectuals, are associated with Bir Zeit and so it has been quite natural that the Israelis have viewed the place as threatening to their interests as occupiers. Certainly in my opinion one of the university's main problems has been its isolation from the Arab world of which it is in culture and history a part.

The languages of instruction are Arabic (mainly) and some English, but very few non-Palestinian Arabs have come to the West Bank, using the fact that they have to have Israeli visas as a pretext for not appearing. Egyptians can come via a permit from the PA, and that strikes me as an excellent way out of the whole problem of normalization with Israel which few Egyptian writers and artists are willing to compromise. All the Bir Zeit people I spoke to said that in the current state of democratization, they regard support by Arab academics and intellectuals as very important indeed.

I could not agree more, and have stated my position to Egyptians when on a very brief visit to Egypt after my trip to Palestine. In any event, Bir Zeit University strikes me as uniquely placed to constitute one of the foundation stones of Palestinian civil society as it tries to strengthen itself against the Israeli onslaught and the abortive peace process.

That so many people in and out of Palestine regard it as a significant element in that society-in-the-making is a sure sign that collectively Palestinian life goes on, the obstacles and hardships notwithstanding. Bir Zeit, and institutions like it, have to be seen as part of the longer view of our history, which the seriousness and acuteness of the present crisis tend to obscure. Without these institutions our political life and survival would be virtually non-existent.

Middle East Real estate to state

Real estate to state

FRESH FROM the impetus of the Wye Plantation to the current stalemate, and the trip of US President Bill Clinton to the region to enhance the spirit of cooperation, the question of the Palestinian state keeps popping up.

We all support the right of Palestinian self-determination. It's a known fact that the status of the Palestinian question is dependent on final status negotiations; unilateral action and declarations from Palestinian and Israeli sides are not conducive to maintaining an atmosphere of confidence. With the leadership in both camps being pushed into a straight jacket out of their own making, they also feel the need to play to their own national constituents. For Mr Arafat, when the peace track gets difficult, the pronouncements of a Palestinian state diverts attention, and attracts plenty of international support especially from those parties who are either straightforwardly sponsoring peace, or have invested heavily in its preservation.

While for Mr Netanyahu and his coalition, a call to grab more land and build more settlements becomes the natural response to the creation of a Palestinian state firing in with the logic of grabbing as much as possible of territories.

Both sides know well that at this stage any unilateral action is not advisable, and will not get international support, and are realistic enough that the whole issue of threats and promises, remains within the confines of bluff and counter bluff. It is always advisable not to escalate the war of words for both sides, because within the concept of bluff, there are consequences which would take issues in the literal sense and make them develop according to a logic of its own. Here lies the danger, when events dictate their own precedence.

Much effort will be done, and the way will be paved for Mr Clinton's arrival to push peace forward. But in the meantime, the scene seems to be set for revitalizing the moribund Syrian-Lebanese-Israeli peace track, and the visit of president Clinton is a clear message to the Syrians that the Israeli insinuations regarding their withdrawal may constitute reasonable testing ground for the continuation of peace talks. At the same time, it is intended to indicate that if no movement occurs on the Palestinian track, the Syria-Lebanese one may become more urgent.

Following this logic, we have become accustomed to a heightened state of violence in southern Lebanon, each time there are indications of peace talks, but this time, our Palestinian brethren seem to have learned the lesson, and they are escalating their own violence in the Occupied Territories to prepare for the final status negotiations, overshadowing events on the Lebanese-Israeli border.

The idea of Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon is not new, and has been floating around for the last few years, with intelligence reports backing such a move, and popular lobby in Israel demanding for it to take effect. But the Israeli dilemma is clear as well in this respect, for despite the fact that such an occupation has yielded little results in terms of providing security and saving life, the matter of Israeli withdrawal is likely to touch a certain aspect of national pride, for such a withdrawal will not happen as a result of negotiations, and does not guarantee at the end, the continuation of negotiations. Therefore if Israel withdraws from south Lebanon, it is likely to be a stealthy one, unconditional and without any future guarantees, except those offered by the Lebanese government. As for our brethren in the PNA, the real estate is there, what remains is to proceed towards the state.

Food for thought

A new electoral law

NOW THAT the ordinary session of Parliament has started in earnest, the talk of the town seems to be about once again on the need for a new electoral law. Critics have said long ago that the present one man, one vote system is unacceptable since, among other things, it doesn't provide for a fair geographical distribution, and therefore people are either more or under represented in the Lower House of Parliament.

Naturally, this is not a view that the Government adheres to for it believes the law serves the democratic process. But clearly people - from different sections of society - are not as supportive, arguing that the law is archaic serving to perpetuate tribalism and division. Tahir Al-Masri, a senator in the Upper House of Parliament even calls the law as one that creates "social fractionalism."

And in this respect, deputies, political party activists, trade unions, professional association members and so on have long ago called for the scrapping of the existing law in favor of one based on proportional representation - PR - could be the buzzword for creating a more politically integrated society.

Having chosen the road, if Jordanians ever get there, there are different types of

electoral systems that can be used for representation. In Europe, Germany, Italy and Belgium have used a system of proportional representation. There are number of electoral systems based on proportional representation.

And in this respect, Jordanians have to choose a system that suits its own environment and circumstances rather than on the basis of PR electoral systems. The advantages, but it also has its own aspects of which we need to be aware. Another disadvantage is that the system of changing quickly, especially in a country like Jordan.

In Jordan, the call for a new electoral law is varied. While some call for the scrapping of the existing law, others call for a system of proportional representation. The call for a new electoral law is varied. While some call for the scrapping of the existing law, others call for a system of proportional representation. The call for a new electoral law is varied. While some call for the scrapping of the existing law, others call for a system of proportional representation.

would save the day at the end.

Business scene

■ A grant agreement by the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and the Jordan Phosphate Mines Co. was signed on 9 December at the JPMC offices in Amman. The fund amounts to \$241,000 which is expected to cover the cost of a feasibility study for the 'slim disposal and water recovery project at Bahidiya Mines'. The study aims to recover sufficient amounts of water from the waste-stream and the phosphate mines, resulting in a better use of natural resources in Jordan. The agreement was signed by the US Ambassador, on behalf of USTDA, and Samah Madani, the managing director of JPMC.

■ Palestinian Minister of Finance, Mohammed Al Nashashibi visited Jordan last week and met with his counterpart Michel Maro. The two ministers discussed the latest developments in the Jordanian and Palestinian economies. Both ministers stressed on the need for mutual cooperation between the two countries.

■ Jordan is expected to join the World Trade Organization by mid-2000. Minister of Trade Mohammed Al Hourani told a special seminar in Washington last week that almost 70 percent of the 'preparations are completed, and the government is working on the process steadily.'

■ Jordan's Free Zones Corp submitted its new draft law on the free-zone areas, in Jordan. The law, due to be implemented in the next year, secures more liberal measures to promote local and Arab investment. The law takes the newly-formed, Aqaba free zone in consideration.

■ Jordan is due to sign 15 agreements with the Egyptian government. The signing is taking place during the visit of Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Jazouli to Amman today, Thursday. He is jointly chairing the Egyptian-Jordanian Higher Committee. The signing will discuss the latest economic developments and the need to form a Joint Trade and Industry Council between the two countries.

■ The Jordanian Exporters Society will send a special delegation to Palestine next March. The delegation comprises businessmen and investors, who will discuss ways to further the economic relations between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

Foreign Exchange		
Wednesday, 9 December 1998		
	Buy JD	Sell JD
US	0.7080	0.7100
EUR	1.1510	1.1568
GBP	0.4124	0.4145
CHF	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
DEM	0.5624	0.5652
ITL	0.3667	0.3685
ESP	0.0419	0.0421

Jordanian stock brokers have their say about the market

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

SINCE THE beginning of the 1990s, the Jordanian economy continued to progress, albeit slowly. Although the government launched the economic adjustment program in 1989, the economy suffered much imbalance, and indicators often showed an erratic spiral especially in the financial field.

And in this respect, the Amman Financial Market (AFM) is considered as the main financial barometer. Analysts suggest that the trading volume in the market is a true reflection of the state of the economy.

Since its establishment in 1978, the AFM became a major institution for the development of the financial sector, to enable Jordan to secure better utilization of the available financial resources through the development of a sound capital market.

Five years later, a parallel market was formed to increase the transactions and turnover of trading.

However, the AFM is much affected by local and regional economic and political developments. And this is apparent from the daily trading volume, and share prices.

Despite this, the November survey reveals an increase in the trading volume, for a second month in a row. It points out that the turnover increased by 300 percent compared to the previous month, registering a total amount of about JD 95 million.

But analysts suggest that there is a special reason for this. The famous deal of the cement factories, which cost about JD 72 million is the main factor behind the bustling market.

Although its objective is to mobilize local investment, the purpose of the AFM is to ensure financial stability as well. "Jordan needs to be more flexible and liberal in dealing with its financial sector," Ahmed Saeed Musa, one of the stock-holders who frequents the



market told *The Star*. He said that when the government is serious about introducing real changes to promote investment, financiers will think twice about moving their capital out of the local market.

Such a move has always been in the back of one's mind, and the on-going recession coupled with regional political developments has not helped matters.

But economic experts say that a new economic policy is under way, and expected to take place as soon as we go into the new year.

The AFM is a major contributor to capital formation, a process which is essential to strengthen the national economy by encouraging savings and investment in the private sector in Jordan.

The process must continue in parallel and along with the regulations set by the Securities Authority.

According to AFM officials, the

Authority is a public financial corporation with legal and administrative powers, and coordinates its function with the national financial strategy.

"The [Securities] Authority now has the power to stop trading in any shares, and upgrade the current system to accommodate the demands," one of the brokers on the AFM floor, told *The Star*.

The broker, who preferred to remain anonymous, added that the Authority was formerly a special department at the Ministry of Finance, now, however, it is fully independent, and its board assigned by the Prime Ministry. About 28 brokerage firms are licensed by the AFM.

However, sources at these companies are fearful of a fierce competition developing next year, as the Authority has given license to three more companies to operate in the market. However, the same sources are optimistic that by next year their companies will be able

to participate in issuing research, monthly studies, managing portfolios and carrying out measures to conduct investment projects.

Official records show that the AFM trading has taken a downward spiral since 1993.

Market experts attribute this to the increased interest rates on shares, a policy dictated by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

CBJ officials said that high interest rates help maintain a strong Jordanian dinar.

Most of the brokers, on the other hand, express fear from political developments in neighboring countries. "We are very sensitive in the political events in Iraq and Palestine," added the broker.

"During the past few months, the market was very unsettled because of news about potential US air strikes against Iraq. The same goes for the Palestinian issue, and the stalemate in the peace process also affected the local market in terms of investors transactions."

On top of that, the issue of foreign ownership greatly increased the atmosphere in the market as the non-Jordanian ownership in shareholding companies increased sharply in 1998 compared with the previous year. And in this respect, one of the basic objectives for the Authority is to coordinate and control the foreign investment at the AFM.

But not all agree. "It's healthy to have increased foreign investment in the market, but that shouldn't come at the expenses of our national interests," said Ali Abu Al Haq, one of the energetic attendants at the AFM.

He said that since the government opened its doors for foreign investment, people hoped that local investors would be treated likewise and be allowed to invest in foreign countries. But sadly, this is not the case. ■

Oil producers agree for a cut but will it last?

AMMAN (Star)—The question of plummeting oil prices have continued to dominate the agenda of the three-day meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council this week. Observers at the conference in Abu Dhabi said that this is the first time that such a venue was focused in one particular direction: the need to reverse slumping international oil prices. All other

issues, such as the security of the oil supply, have been pushed aside by the need to agree to an international oil benchmark price. But this is easier said than done. As the conference got underway Monday,

benchmark Brent blend crude slumped to trade in single digits for the first time since 1986 and touch a low of \$9.90 a barrel. It recovered slightly to close in London at \$10.28, up nine cents over the day, buoyed by late news that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah had urged more measures to stop the rot. "We must not stand idle while watching the main source of our revenues subjected to this big shakeup as a result of the imbalance between supply and demand in the oil market. We must not hesitate to take further measures," he told a summit of Gulf Arab leaders in Abu Dhabi. Average Brent prices so far this year are the lowest since 1976 at just \$13.55. The slide into single figures came amid evidence that output discipline among Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries members is disintegrating. But the con-

ference in the end agreed to exercise restraint and cut oil production.

Oil ministers of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council agreed to reduce production starting in March.

The leaders of the six Gulf Arab countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates—have been trying to head off a growing economic crisis. The oil producers have been hard hit by sagging prices, which are blamed on recession in Asia and warmer-than-usual winters. The Gulf countries, sit on half the world's proven oil reserves and depend on exports for 75 percent of their revenues. However, this doesn't mean that they can maintain international oil prices. This is because of two basic factors. States in the GCC countries themselves have not stuck to their oil production quotas, and international oil producers have not sought to exercise restraint.

Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Venezuela, all three very powerful members in OPEC, have not seen eye to eye in the past. However, things seem to be changing this week.

Both Iran and Saudi Arabia, anxious over collapsed oil

prices, are exerting fresh efforts to align their views on ways of reducing the petroleum market.

"There have been more consultations lately and Iran is ready to back any step that will help the oil price," Mohammed Reza Nouri, Iran's ambassador to Saudi Arabia, told Reuters.

Iranian-Saudi consultations came at a critical time for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, which is under mounting pressure from the lowest oil prices since 1976. OPEC failed in its winter meeting last month in Vienna to agree any measures to save prices, a decision that sent a new wave of pessimism across the world oil market. Instead, divisions deepened between OPEC's three biggest producers—Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Iran—together controlling more than half the group's 27 million barrels of daily output. Saudi Arabia believes its two rivals are reneging on supply curbs pledged earlier this year that have failed to lift market depression. Iran has insisted that the baseline for its own output cuts should be raised to higher levels.

The Islamic republic wants Saudi Arabia to reverse some of the production gains it made in the wake of the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis. In November, Saudi Oil Minister Ali Al Naimi and his Iranian counterpart, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, held talks on sagging oil prices in Tehran but reached no decision on

what to do. Despite sharp differences, Iran believes the time is ripe to try and reach some "common ground" with Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter and the dominant force in OPEC, a once powerful cartel now plagued by squabbling.

"It is obvious that supply management has to be carried out. The first step is for Iran and Saudi Arabia to understand each other's positions in a clearer way," said a source familiar with Iranian thinking.

"The time is now appropriate to raise this issue again. There needs to be new production cutbacks," the source added.

"But it has to be done step by step." Iran has said it would push for a further OPEC output cut of 1.5 million barrels per day at the next group meeting in March. "Something has to be done soon," said another source familiar with Iran's concerns over weak prices. Iranian newspapers have recently blamed Saudi Arabia for low oil prices, an accusation that does not reflect the government's position.

Though OPEC decided not to extend current restraint beyond the agreed June 1999 limit and opted not to deepen cuts, there are signs that further action could be on the cards before the March meeting. OPEC Secretary-General Rikman Lukman said Saturday that the oil cartel would not rule out holding an emergency

meeting before its next scheduled session in March. Mexican Energy Minister Luis Téllez said he would visit fellow oil-producing nations in coming weeks to try and stabilize battered oil prices.

Mexico, along with Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, this year masterminded cuts of some 3.1 million barrels per day. But since then, international benchmarks have fallen again. And despite the fact that Venezuela has been widely seen as violating its OPEC production quota for months,

crude firms in the country have vowed to toe the OPEC line. Crude oil futures prices in Asia rose Monday after the Venezuelan presidential election winner said he would rigorously comply with OPEC production cuts. In a press conference, he vowed closer ties with OPEC and said Venezuela would comply rigorously with OPEC production cuts. Despite pledges and goodwill, the coming will see how far the oil producers are united in sticking to production cuts and quotas.

Traders, for instance are skeptical about whether Venezuela would be able to comply, given strong domestic pressure to boost national income. "If the economy suffers any more at any point in time, they could decide to produce more crude to generate additional revenues," one oil broker said. ■

Rocking the capitalist boat!

DIRECT FOREIGN investment maybe the key to development in emerging markets. The more money you pump in, the better the prospects for economic growth and stability. Indeed, in the short-, medium- and long-term more direct foreign investments is a sure sign of international confidence in the local economy.

But today there are worrying signs that international firms are switching more of their money away from emerging markets into safer industrialized countries, according to an economic report published last week.

Could this be the way forward for the next couple of years? If this is the case then it could mean that the international money markets would become more insular, bedding their bets to more "safe heavens" and staying put in relatively familiar surroundings. This would mean more bad news for economies in Third World countries. Jordan included—who would normally expect foreign investments to come by their way.

The news comes about as a result of a survey of bosses at the world's top 1,000 companies by US consultancy A.T. Kearney. It pointed out that companies believe they are less likely to invest abroad compared with six months ago.

The investment sentiment survey was carried out between September and October in the wake of world market turmoil that was ignited by the collapse of the Russian economy in August. The global market tremors have chastened foreign investors, said the report, leading to a flight to safety among those companies still keen on investing.

"The market for FDI has become a buyer's market," said Paul Laudicina, A.T. Kearney vice president and head of the global Business Policy Council, which conducted the survey. "Corporations are looking more carefully at business environment fundamentals," he said in a statement.

Business confidence among investors is highest in the United States, which is at the top of their investment shopping list, followed by Brazil, China, Britain and Germany. While major emerging market economies like Brazil and China have remained attractive, others like Russia and Indonesia have dropped out of the investors' top 25 altogether.

Investors remain selective in their treatment of emerging markets, continuing to have some confidence in South Korea, Thailand and Japan.

"Investors appear to be carefully observing the policy environment in the crisis economies and are reacting positively to those countries implementing a reform agenda," said Laudicina. In Europe, Britain remains the top spot for foreign investment thanks to its flexible labor laws and its position as a springboard into the European Union markets.

Britain is particularly attractive in terms of financial services investment, ranking only second to the United States. Those companies seeking to invest in heavy manufacturing are putting their money into China, Brazil, India, Mexico and Poland, said the report. The report was conducted by A.T. Kearney using the *Fortune* 1,000 list of companies. ■

Western Union celebrates the opening of its 50,000 location

ON 11 November 1998, Western Union International Services opened its 50,000 location in the Brazilian city of São Paulo. Western Union is a leading money company in high-speed, worldwide financial transfers between 165 countries. The accurate and speedy way depends on highly developed computer system. Cairo-Amman Bank is the sole agent for this significant

service in both Jordan and Palestine.

Through its 42 branches in Jordan and 20 branches in Palestine, Cairo-Amman Bank currently works on the program and provides services for the public in both countries. It only takes you a short visit to one of its branches, and you will be impressed by the high speed service which doesn't take more than five minutes. ■

Citibank supports NHF micro-credit program

GENERAL MANAGER of Citibank Jordan Mrs Suhair Al Ajl presented the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) Executive Director Dr Sima Bahous, with a check for \$40,000 as a grant from Citibank to NHF's micro-finance programme for women.

The grant is in line with NHF's and Citibank's strategy to forge strong cooperation between the private sector and the NGOs in support of national development efforts, and particularly those geared to upgrade the quality of life of underprivileged Jordanians, especially women.

Citibank, whose parent is Citigroup, one of the largest financial services companies in the world serving 100 million customers, in 100 countries, began operations in Jordan in 1974. As a corporate citizen, Citibank focuses on managing its businesses well in a manner that allows the bank to provide quality products and services to its customers, offer rewarding career to its employees, generate tax revenues to the local government and increase value to its shareholders.

Mrs Al Ajl said, "We also believe that we must contribute to the communities in which we do business. Citibank has therefore made major commitments to community building in our markets across the globe. We support community development and service projects, and we support micro lenders around the world. We also connect youngsters to the thrill of learning through classroom technologies. In Jordan, we have not only focused on training of our staffs, but have also actively contributed to training the local banking and business community. We have supported a number of community development efforts, most notably the Sabelat Al Hassan, and are keen to support this pilot micro-finance project for women. We are convinced that healthy businesses and healthy communities must grow hand in hand," she added. ■

The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly
Online
<http://star.arabia.com>

By Nawfal Al Jourani

OIL AND tribal politics seems to be fiercely inter-twined in Yemen. Recently, tribesmen blew up a US-owned pipeline which carries oil from Al Safir field in the north-eastern province of Marib. The pipeline is owned by the American Hunt Oil Company. This is the second attack on Hunt in as many weeks by members of the Jahn tribe in Marib. Tribesmen say that they are trying to force the

government to build power plants and a water distribution system in their region. But trouble in Marib has long been brewing, and observers say that this is partly because of the growing oil industry which is dominated by foreign companies. The fiercely independent tribes in this province have started running a special kind of protection for the foreign oil companies. Tribesmen get paid for guarding the companies' assets and employees. And oil companies try to opt out for the quite life. After a spate of attacks on pipelines this year, one of the assailants was hospitalized with shrapnel wounds, AFP reported. When he was released, the tribesman insisted that the US company operating the pipeline pay his hospital expenses, and they agreed. In another incident, a sacked worker was given his job back after he returned the company truck which he stole as a protest. What's more company

officials reimbursed him for the petrol expenses he incurred while he was driving the truck. There are dozens of Western oil workers who are based in camps around Marib, which was a major trading route in ancient times and capital of the Sheba kingdom and its legendary queen, Balqis.

Swimming pools, satellite TV dishes, comfakes, and maple syrup go some way toward making up for the rigors of everyday life on the camps, where poisonous snakes are not an uncommon sight. Security is a two-tiered arrangement. Army troops manning armored personnel carriers form the outer cordon, while bedouins are paid to guard an inner perimeter fence. "They are all paid by the oil companies," said a sub-contractor. "But although the tribes are paid on a regular basis, the same people who are guarding you are also behind the attacks," added another European who has been in Yemen's young oil business since its

birth in the mid-1980s. Apart from bomb or Kalashnikov attacks on pipelines, several oil workers have been snatched and their cars stolen. Duty-free four-wheel drives are the main target, but even a helicopter was briefly hijacked while it was on the ground. To avoid such incidents, workers are not allowed to leave camp without an armed escort.

In times of tension, the province, with its fascinating 3,000-year-old date and temples of the Himyarite civilization which flourished some 200 years BC, are declared off-limits for tourists. The phenomenon of kidnapping is not isolated to Marib, however.

Seven Italians were kidnapped in southern Yemen in June. But a presidential decree in August that made kidnapping an offence punishable by death has so far proved an effective deterrent. In more than 150 foreigner kidnappings over the past five years, all the victims have been released unharmed after negotiations

between tribes and the government, often through tribal mediators.

Despite the unrelenting "that's the good thing about Yemen, it's always kind of nice and no foreigners get hurt as such," said a US sub-contractor. However, more than 60 people died last month when two Marib tribes, the Murad and Al Abu Tuhail, clashed with automatic arms, mortars, and multiple rocket launchers because of a land dispute, according to tribal sources.

The oil companies issue regular security updates to their employees, as well as arrange "cultural awareness" programs. They also meet to pool information with the embassies in Sanaa, where foreign companies lodge their employees on the outskirts of the city under armed guards. A Canadian firm operating in Al Massila, south-east of the capital, has been the target of unpublicized attacks on its pipeline, a diplomatic source said, even though it runs

a free clinic for local villagers. Yemen's three pipelines, running hundreds of kilometers to the Red Sea, or Gulf of Aden, cross the lands and farms of tribes which are desperate for funds to build schools and roads or just to dig a new well. Incidents between the oil companies and tribes, who feel they are not getting a fair share of the rewards, have occurred ever since oil was first pumped in 1984 and were followed by exports three years later.

Apart from US and Canadian workers, several other nationalities also work in Yemen's oil production or exploration, including South Koreans, Russians, Iraqis, Kuwaitis, Saudis, and other Arabs. Foreign oil executives are now concerned over plans to build a pipeline for gas exports, a venture involving French, US, and South Korean firms. "An attack on that could really be explosive," warned one executive. ■

05.11.1998

Zahira Kamal, a Palestinian gender rights activist

Pursuing Arab women's rights

By Ann Brenoff

Women in Saudi Arabia today may not drive cars or be alone with men who are not immediate relatives. Amnesty International says women in this Arab nation are at risk of being detained and accused of immoral behavior merely for walking alone or not wearing a headscarf. Iraqi women may not appear in public unveiled. In Iran earlier this year, three women were arrested on charges that they had voluntary sexual relations outside marriage. The penalty they faced: being stoned to death.

It's easy to assume that all Arab women are veiled and silent. The idea of an active women's liberation movement existing within Arab nations seems incongruous. Yet such a movement exists within the Palestinian community, and Zahira Kamal is a principal force behind it.

Kamal, the director of gender planning and development for the Palestinian National Authority and a member of the Palestinian Parliament, works for the empowerment of Palestinian women on a broad basis in an environment often hostile to women. Palestinian society is patriarchal, with women usually relegated only to child-rearing and homemaking. Early marriage is the norm, there are no domestic-violence laws and girls frequently have no schooling beyond elementary grades. All of which makes Kamal's rise in this society that much more extraordinary.

Kamal fought her first battle for gender equality at age 16. Upon graduating from high school and being told that her family's limited savings were reserved for her younger brothers' education, she threatened a hunger strike and persuaded her father to let her attend a university in Cairo. After graduating with a double major, she returned to Jerusalem and taught physics. Soon, she became involved in the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and women's rights.

Kamal was imprisoned by

the Israelis for six months in 1979 for protesting the Camp David agreements. But she served as a member of the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid, Spain, peace conference in 1991 and in 1992 secretly traveled to Tunisia, Tunisia, with other prominent Palestinians to meet with the Palestine Liberation Organization, in defiance of an Israeli ban on contacts with the PLO. Twenty years ago, she established the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committee, an act that led to her "preventive imprisonment" (town arrest) for six years, the longest such arrest ever imposed on a woman.

Kamal, 53, has devoted her life to fighting for laws against domestic violence and for improved educational opportunities and the establishment of a mandatory minimum marriage age. She spoke to the *Los Angeles Times* during a recent visit to Los Angeles.

You've devoted your career to the advancement of Palestinian women and fought for gender equality. What signs do you see that the emerging Palestinian state is going to treat women any differently from the rest of the Arab world?

I know that rights are not given easily. There is always a struggle; even in the United States there is a struggle. Palestinian women are working and watching the emergence of our state with open eyes. Yes, we are part of the Arab world, but the difference is that the Palestinian state is now first developing, and we have the experience of the other Arab countries to examine. And we have the chance to be something different, because women are part of this state from its establishment.

Islam's influence in much of the Arab world appears to be growing. How would you characterize what is going on regarding the treatment of women?

We can't put the Arab world in one bloc. Some [countries]



Zahira Kamal

have very developed laws [benefiting women] compared with other Arab countries. Some places have active [women's rights] movements. In Egypt, there are very active women who speak out. In Lebanon, it is even more organized.

Do you think Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat has been a good friend to women, even though he regularly defers taking action

on women's issues—domestic violence laws, for one—seemingly out of regard for traditionalists?

Yes, by and large Arafat has supported women's issues. But at the same time, you must remember that change does not come just from one single person; it takes a collective effort to make the change. During the Palestinian revolution, women were treated as equal partners. But it is true, just like in any

Western country, when it comes to the more prestigious and higher-ranking positions, the men want to keep them. The discrimination comes at that level....

There is a large gap in the illiteracy rates between Palestinian men and women: 23 percent for women and 8.5 percent for men. What is the Palestinian Authority doing about it?

The illiteracy rate is highest among women over 45. And we acknowledge that there was a time when this sector of women was deprived of education. Now, we also have a problem of early marriage with girls between the ages of 14 to 17. Most of the dropouts from school come in that period. There is a big educational campaign now against early marriage. This campaign comes through the legislative system, which didn't forbid early marriage totally but determined that anyone under 18 needed special permission from a judge to marry.

We also want the minister of education to open classes in all villages. Our schools are segregated, boys separate from girls. In some villages, there are no secondary schools for girls, and they must go to another village if they want to continue their schooling.

Isn't the prevailing attitude that women don't need much education because what's expected is that they'll get married early, have large families and keep house?

It is changing a little. I think the big change happens when women have work opportunities. Families won't invest in education. Education is like any other investment. They want to see after you are educated what you're giving the family. After boys are educated, they work and support the family.

You were once quoted as saying that your fight for gender equality had three obstacles: the Israelis, the Islamists

and the traditionalists. Ultimately, which is the greatest obstacle?

The Israelis. Because of the occupation, it's very difficult to work for social rights, because national rights come first. All the people in the country can gather around national rights, but when we talk about social rights, it is perhaps traditions that need to be changed.

At one point, you were a peace rejectionist. You were arrested for protesting the Camp David accord. What made you change your mind?

It is not that I've changed my mind. It is that there is a change in how I see the means to reach the independence. I was struggling for the political rights of my country and its self-determination. It was a time of nationalism, Arab nationalism. With Camp David, Egypt was trying to control the Palestinians and decide—instead of us—what was best for us. We were not part of the Camp David accord. The Palestinians are the only ones who have the right to decide their future. That's why I was rejecting Camp David, but perhaps Camp David is much better than Oslo.

It's been said that in signing the Wye Memorandum in October, the only thing the Israelis and Palestinians agreed to do was what they had already agreed to do. Do you have hope it will work?

This agreement is not an agreement. I call it a timetable for the arrangements. It was necessary because [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is not willing to give back anything. He looks for excuses to not implement the agreement. He blames us for what they call terrorist acts against Israel, even though the Palestinians didn't have control over all the land of West Bank and Gaza. How can we control a person going there if we don't have control of the land?

Brenoff is an assistant editor on the opinion-editorial desk at the *Los Angeles Times*.

Iran slips off list of heroin producers

By Thomas W. Lippman

WASHINGTON—US President Clinton, Monday removed Iran from the government's list of major drug-producing countries, telling Congress that Iran has virtually eliminated cultivation of the opium poppies that produce heroin.

The president's action means Iran will no longer be subject to the annual review process known as "certification," in which selected countries must be certified as cooperating with US efforts to combat drug trafficking or face the loss of US aid and other economic sanctions.

Senior officials said Iran's removal from the so-called "majors" list after 11 years will have no immediate effect because the country, which is still listed by the State Department as a major sponsor of international terrorism, receives no economic or military aid from the United States. The United States will continue to vote against loans or grants to Iran in multilateral lending institutions such as the World Bank, officials said.

State Department and White House officials said Iran was dropped from the list because it no longer met the standard for inclusion set by Congress. Officials said the decision was unrelated to the administration's effort to improve relations with Iran.

"It's not as if the president winked at some details in order to reach out to the Iranians," one administration official said. "But we don't mind if they read it positively."

A country must be put on the US list if it has 2540 acres or more of opium poppies or coca plants under cultivation, or if it is a "significant direct source" of drugs to the United States. Iran did not fall either test, US officials said, basing their assessment on satellite reconnaissance and extensive surveys by intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Clinton also removed Malaysia from the list, which now includes 27 countries plus Hong Kong. Among them are 16 in the Western Hemisphere, including Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, dramatizing the exposure of the United States to the flow of narcotics from neighboring countries.

In addition, Clinton listed Cuba, the Netherlands Antilles, Costa Rica, El

Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua as "areas of concern," noting, "Geography makes Central America a logical conduit and transshipment area for South American drugs bound for Mexico and the United States, and that there has been evidence of increased trafficking activity in this region of the last year."



LA Times-Washington Post/News Service

Army takes new tack on Gulf War syndrome

By David Brown

WASHINGTON—The man in the lab coat draws a wavy line on the blackboard. It could be depicting any number of things that go up and down. Tides, perhaps, or pistons, or the populations of bugs. This wave, however, depicts the course of a chronic illness. The teacher wants to know what it's like to ride it, month after month.

"What do you do when you're at one of these places?" he asks, pointing to a trough. "I don't want to see my wife and kids," says one of his listeners.

"You want it to go away," says another. "It affects your work performance," says a third. The teacher points to a peak on the curve. What about when you're here?

"That's the day you say, OK, sweetheart, let's take the kids, let's go out to the park," says the first man. "It's like someone gives you a jackpot." The teacher returns to the line. "What we're going to try to do is flatten these curves out. It's probably not realistic to get rid of the ups and downs completely."

His last statement is neither promise nor prediction, but only a hope. It will take work, luck, and most of the next month, to seem like a reasonable one.

The exchange occurred earlier this year on Ward 64 of Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. The listeners were four men and one woman with Gulf War Syndrome. The teacher was Lt. Col. Charles C. Engel Jr., a career army physician. They had come together for three weeks of physical therapy, classroom lectures, group discussion, consumer education and practical instruction on how to make the most of a bad thing.

Since the end of the Gulf War more than seven years ago, a large number of veterans have reported they are chronically ill. Many believe the war is to blame. Some have gotten little relief from their pain, despite intensive medical care. In the last two years, about 185 have ended up on Ward 64. "A lot of the people who come here have been beating down doors for seven years trying to get someone to acknowledge the reality of their symptoms," says Engel, who directs the Specialized Care Program at Walter Reed. "We tell them: 'You don't have to beat down this door. It's open.' "We tell them: "There is a Gulf War Syndrome. And you have it." The doctor's assertion of Gulf War Syndrome's reality is a breath of fresh air for many veterans. But his statement is misleading in one sense. "Gulf War Syndrome" is more a term of art than a formal description of a disease.

The condition is commonly thought to include some combination of the following symptoms: fatigue, muscle or joint pains, gastrointestinal complaints, skin rashes, poor sleep, memory problems and difficulties concentrating. It differs from true medical syndromes in important ways, however. People with it share little more than participation in the Gulf War (and, in a few cases, not even that). They suffered no unique exposures, their illness has no cardinal feature, and their symptoms follow no predictable course.

Gulf War Syndrome bears some resemblance to a few other chronic illnesses, not

ably chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), multiple chemical sensitivity (MCA) and fibromyalgia. The lack of "objective" explanation for these diseases leads many doctors to reject a patient's disability as spurious, or dismiss symptoms as psychological. Consequently, sufferers often consult many practitioners, accumulating tests, diagnoses and pills, as well as frustration, anger and, occasionally, hopelessness.

By the time a Gulf War veteran gets to the Specialized Care Program, he or she has (on average) visited the doctor 17 times, undergone 62 tests and filled 13 prescriptions. The average patient complains of 10 symptoms and carries six diagnoses. Most are tired of looking for answers but cannot bring themselves to give up the search.

When they get to Ward 64, however, things change quickly. The doctors, nurses and therapists there aren't looking for answers.

Actually, they aren't even interested in them. When it comes to Gulf War Syndrome, they have given up on tests, theories and diagnoses, and they urge their patients to do the same. In that first act of surrender, they believe, may lie the secret to living with it.

At age 31, Cruz has a painful shoulder that has kept him from fulfilling his physical training requirement for several years. He has back, hip, knee and ankle pain that makes even running uncomfortable. He feels chronically stiff and out-of-shape. And that's not the half of it.

After the war, he began having sleeping problems. Ultimately, he was diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea, a disorder in which a person periodically stops breathing during sleep. Now when he goes to bed, he puts on a cumbersome mask that forces air into his nose and mouth under pressure, and sleeps better.

In recent years, he also has had surgery for chronic sinusitis, and developed allergies. For these problems he uses four different inhalers, and takes a pill every day. How did this all happen? He isn't sure, but he has an idea. In the gulf, he served in a military police unit. Among his many tasks was hosing down combat vehicles that had been brought back from the front. He believes there may have been something in the rivers of dirty water that poured off them that caused at least some of his symptoms.

Cruz began his account sitting at the table, but now he's so worked up he's standing and gesturing theatrically. "So maybe it was all in my head. But I was OK in the head. But I'm thinking, maybe they're wrong. I mean, all I really want is to get back to what I was doing before. Get back to the way things were. I don't want to just lie around the house."

Engel wants to continue with his lecture. But this group, unlike many, is up, running and ready to talk. Telling them to sit down, shut up and listen is, well, part of what's caused them so much misery. So he modifies the lesson plan. He asks them what it was like when they suddenly found themselves with a chronic illness.

Staff Sgt. Teromee White, who is 38 and

served in a quartermaster unit in the gulf, jumps in. Like Cruz, he's a New Yorker—loud, expressive and used to talking to strangers. "I was healthy. I never went to a doctor or nothing. When I was 30, I could hurt myself and boom—I'd get better." Soon, he's standing and shouting, his voice raspy with disbelief. "Nothing like this happened before. I could do anything. So why's this happening now?"

White, too, was diagnosed with sleep apnea and chronic sinusitis. He has joint pains, headaches and, like Cruz, a theory. In the gulf, he fell off a truck and injured his left shoulder and wrist. The wrist healed, but the shoulder still hurts. Years later, he recalled he had gotten an anthrax vaccination in that arm. He has met a half-dozen people, he says, who still hurt in the arm where they got the shot. The diversion in the conversation turns out to be useful, for it allows Engel to get back on track and talk about what people expect from "medicine," and what they think is necessary to get better.

The issue of expectations is crucial. For the Specialized Care Program to do any good, Engel believes, the patients must give up the idea that they must first solve the mystery of Gulf War Syndrome before getting on with their own recovery. They also have to loosen the bonds between illness and impairment. Most people, he says, assume you cannot possibly address an impairment without first identifying the illness—that's causing it. But is that so?

Engel asks the group to think of things—other than the disease itself—that go into determining how a sick person fares. The group offers a few ideas, but the teacher has to supply most himself. On the board he writes: "other medical illnesses," "motivation and attitude," "fitness," "family support," "education," "alternative approaches," "primary care doctor."

His point is that even if a person's diagnosis is unknown, there's a lot of variables—some under the person's control—that determine the final outcome. "Rather than focus only on the illness and seeing what we can do about it," he says as the session ends, "let's see what we can do to alter the impairment."

One by one during the first week, each patient relates his trips down this path, from the end of the Gulf War in 1991 to the most recent visit to the doctor. The narratives are long and convoluted, and most bear little connection to Gulf War service.

Sgt. Anita Deaning's is typical of many Specialized Care Program participants, the staff members say. She spent eight months in Saudi Arabia as a postal clerk, most of the time at a desert installation where she



Staff Sgt. Anibal Cruz Jr., foreground, an Army recruiter in Brooklyn, N.Y., practices relaxation skills as part of his therapy for Gulf War Syndrome at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. In background are Bettyanne Perry and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Rollert.

could feel the ground shake from mortar fire. After a Scud missile exploded overhead, she and some of her fellow soldiers took to sleeping in their boots and chemical suits.

She had several bouts of diarrhea in the gulf, and these continued when she returned home, especially when she exercised. The problem became "really, really bad," she says, after her daughter was born four years later. She missed a lot of days in her office job at the Pentagon, slept fitfully, and was always tired.

Ultimately, she was diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome, a condition characterized by intermittent diarrhea and constipation. She also has wrist pain caused by a mild case of carpal tunnel syndrome.

For a long time, Deaning, who is 27, didn't connect her health problems to the Gulf War. Last year, however, she (and more than 170,000 other gulf veterans) got

a letter from the Pentagon saying she was within 50 kilometers of the "hot zone" in Iraq, where a munitions dump containing rockets filled with poison gas was blown up after the war. Although there's no evidence anyone was exposed to the gas, some people believe sub-lethal concentrations caused chronic illness in soldiers nearby.

"That's when the light went on," Deaning says of the letter, "and I concluded that's probably why I was getting sick."

Nearly all the stories share a common feature. It's a roadblock—sometimes temporary, sometimes permanent—at the "diagnosis" step in the pathway Engel sketched on the board. When medical practitioners run into roadblocks, they turn to one of four options, Engel tells the group. He calls them "the four R's."

■ Rejection. Send the patient away, saying there's nothing that can be done.

■ Referral. Send the patient to another doctor.

■ Retest. Backtrack, do some more diagnostic procedures, and try to get past the roadblock.

■ Rx. Prescribe a drug, try a treatment. If this doesn't work, fall back on a "prescription of disability." It hurts when you play catch with your son? Rx: Stop playing catch. Diarrhea whenever you take mandatory physical training? Rx: Don't take PT. Which often means, kudos your military career goodbye.

It's clear from the patients' narratives that snacking into the four R's has caused a lot of unhappiness. As they look back, it's hard for them to separate the hurt bodies from the hurt feelings and frustration they've acquired in their journeys through the medical system.

This last fact is one of the central messages the Walter Reed program tries to make. It's not the idea—the staff says emphatically and repeatedly—that emotions caused the soldiers' pain. But emotion can change the perception of pain; it can alter the attention paid to pain; it can, in some sense, the meaning of pain.

Nearly every day, the group has a session with Roy Clymer, a psychologist, and Suzanne DeMarais, a therapist. The session is built roughly on the principles of "cognitive therapy"—the idea that changing how a person thinks about things can sometimes change how they feel. In one of the early sessions, the two teachers ask about the internal conversation—the "tape"—each participant plays to himself.

"When I first got sick, it wasn't so much

angry as being sick but angry at loss of control," says Sgt. 1st Class Robert Rollert, who has been suffering from a seizure disorder and memory loss. "Not being able to drive, dependent on people, couldn't do anything, kept screwing up."

Rollert spent the war not in Saudi Arabia, but in the German port of Bremerhaven. He worked as a military police officer. One of his jobs was guarding—and crawling around on—tanks and personnel carriers being shipped back from the gulf to the United States. He believes there may have been chemicals or toxins on the vehicles that somehow led to seizures he began having in 1997.

His problems have snowballed since then. He has had to switch anticonvulsant medications three times because of side effects. Initial skepticism about his complaints led to several angry confrontations with doctors, and a referral to a psychiatrist. He has trouble concentrating and remembering things, and his diminished capacity has caused resentment in his unit at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Recently, he also developed carpal tunnel syndrome, which he says took months for any doctor to take seriously. "I felt I was treated like a dog. Here I was in constant pain, and just a little bit of compassion would have been nice."

These problems—on the worsening nature of them—have left Rollert very worried about his future. He's 35 and has 20 years in the Army. He fears that when he leaves he won't be able to get a job and support his family.

The key message on his tape, he tells DeMarais: "Unless there's a miracle cure, there's things I'll never be able to do again."

When it's Cruz's turn to talk, he once again wants to give some history. How he was working as a parts manager for a Chrysler dealership in the Bronx, making \$2,000 a month. How he was in the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR), a branch of the Army Reserve, with only 40 days left in his enlistment. How he got a telegram telling him to report for active duty, at \$700 a month.

"God-dog!" says White. "You went to the Gulf War out of the IRR? No wonder he's mad. I'd be mad too."

When he returned from Saudi Arabia, however, Cruz decided to stay in the service. Despite downward-spiraling health, he made a name for himself as a recruiter, specializing, he notes with irony, in selling the Army to doctors, nurses and other health professionals. He even won a prize given to the Army's most successful recruiters.

"And I got QMP'd. Why did I get QMP'd?" he asks, referring to the "qualitative management program" by which the Army decides whether a soldier should be retained or discharged. "I can't pass my PT for the last three years."

Clymer probes him for any themes in what he's told the group, and what he tells himself. "Sure. It's hurt," Cruz says openly. "It's not only that I'm physically hurt, I'm emotionally hurt."

"I think this is good," says DeMarais. "I imagine, Anibal, that every time you go to a doctor, these thoughts come into your head. Maybe we can find a way for that to happen less. Not make the thoughts go away, but make them be there less."

LA Times-Washington Post/News Service

Dancer immolated on the altar of stardom

By Clement Crisp

A STAR throughout his theatrical career, Rudolf Nureyev is now a star of the Burke and Hare literary business. His tomb is not a last resting place; it is regularly disturbed by biographers and memoirists. Since his death in 1993, two lengthy accounts of his life have appeared: one a tasteless exercise in steam-bath revelations with an additional and pointless little volume about his declining years, and a proliferation of magazine visits to the dear departed. There has been the further brouhaha of the sale of his effects in London and New York; contention about his will, his trusts, his exact intentions. Now arrives a third biographical tome, from an American, Diane Solway: *Nureyev: His Life* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20). It is a daunting volume of 550 pages, in addition to source notes and the usual paraphernalia, and it weighs heavily on its subject as it does on the reader's hands.

I am increasingly of the view that the worst gift a wicked fairy can bestow at a christening is 'stardom'. The appurtenances of fame, glamour, wealth, may seem desirable, but no parent should wish on a child the terrible payment stardom exacts in neurotic tensions, in the fight with the years, in the ferocious insecurities, and the denials of talent which may come from satisfying the fans rather than the talent itself.

Rudolf Nureyev was a star, a great star, self-created, self-perpetuating, fiercely combative in protecting his stardom, and finally immolated on its altar. He had in abundance that prime gift which the star must possess: sex appeal. Women, men, young, old, off-stage, and

on-stage, responded to the erotic charge of his presence. He had, too, those other essential star gifts: self-obsession, and the ability to make an audience believe utterly in him. What I find to be the real tragedy of his life and perhaps a cause of his fascination for us was his flawed abilities as a dancer.

He wanted to be a dancer from the age of seven, when he saw ballet for the first time, in remote and unlovely Ufa on New Year's eve, 1939. The focusing of his temperament on this ideal was thenceforth intense and irresistible. By unrelenting self-belief, by native wit and Tassie bravado, he got himself to Leningrad, to that holy of holies the Vaganova school, and thence to the Kirov Ballet. The physical instrument was unprepared, inadequately trained. He overcame every defect with his uncanny eye for dancing, and by a no less canny appreciation of his own potential.

His career thereafter was devoted to making the world see that he was a great classical dancer. This, on absolute Kirov terms, he never was: we have but to compare him with his Leningrad contemporary, the sublime and effortless Yuri Solovoyev, angelic in talent and temperament. Yet he imposed an image of himself upon the world as a premier danseur, turned faults into excitement. His star quality, his passionate intelligence, the intellectual hunger of a starved child never left him and his exceptional power of self-analysis (which also made him a superlative coach for other artists), did the rest.

He worked. He worked probably harder than any dancer before him, and his flight to the west was part of that work. He laboured on his own perfor-

mances, travelled unendingly in which to star, inspired indifferent troupes by his presence and by his ballets. The stage was, as he admitted, 'home': everything else was but an interruption on the way to the stage. Even in his saddening late performances, when the eye of faith was needed to see his merits, he still ignored injury, ill-health, gimcrack setting kept that appointment with his own destiny quite as much as with his public. What he loved, and the only thing to satisfy his unappeasable appetite, was the classic academic dance. If, as a critic, I felt sometimes ambivalent about his performances or his self-indulgent stagings, I knew that his every action was dictated by zeal for ballet itself, as an art for which no sacrifice was too great. His private life may have seemed Dionysiac, but his art, the centre of his being, was dedicated to Apollo.

Solway's tome treats of all this. It is heavily researched and, I find, heavily detailed. She has ferreted out facts from Soviet archives, and is good on the outline of Nureyev's defection at Orly airport in 1961. She has interviewed friends and family and associates, lovers and hangers-on. She has pillaged press-cuttings and books. She analyses the most significant love-affair in Nureyev's life, which was with the peerless classical Erik Bruhn, whom Nureyev worshipped and nearly destroyed. (Amateur psychologists can have a field-day here.) She follows many of his theatrical activities, and some of his sexual involvements. She looks at his on-stage and off-stage relationship with Margot Fonteyn, observes his generosity and his sometimes vile social manners, his retinue of friends and slaves (these mostly seem

indistinguishable).

As a mosaic portrait made from a myriad fragments, the book is a clever assemblage. It is also something of a bore. Solway writes in that American journalistic manner which seeks to give its reader every relevant fact about everything. No name or event but has its note or sometimes leaden explanation. Yet, dutiful as Solway is, I felt that she is somehow a stranger to the world of ballet. She writes from the outside, and her slips in fact and opinion are curious. Her views about ballet and dancers can seem skewed. I do not, for example, believe that pre-Nureyev male technique was inelegant in Russia: certainly no Soviet danseur that I saw was less than polished.

Nothing in her writing indicates that Solway saw Nureyev dancing in his finest years: there is little fire in her accounts of his achievements. And I find in excruciating taste her lingering over Nureyev's final months in his Paris home. Mortally sick, he still kept his appointment with his art, staging *La Bayadere* for the Paris Opera Ballet in the months before he died. This was as brave and thrilling as anything in his life and, as someone who was present at the first performance, I must record that, contrary to Solway's view, Nureyev's final salute to his public, standing unaided and smiling on the stage, and visibly inspired and strengthened by the cheers, was noble and commanding, heart-tearing. (And I heard no 'urgent cries of Au revoir'.) Respect for her subject should have made Miss Solway less ghoulish. But then, Burke and Hare had no qualms.

Financial Times Syndication



By David Pilling

ROWS AND rows of what look like upended photocopiers, their grey lids clamped shut, hum quietly. A couple of technicians in white lab coats drift through the aisles. The room, and the tunnel-like corridors beyond, are featureless and almost deserted. It would be hard to conjure up a less animated scene.

Yet here, in this spick-and-span setting, one of the most important scientific endeavours of the century is unfolding. The modern building, just outside Cambridge, is the Sanger Centre, and one of the machines designed to spell out the 3 billion chemical letters, the A's, C's, G's and T's contained in human DNA. The aim of the Human Genome Project, a 15-year, US-led collaboration of which the Sanger Centre is part, is to decode the roughly 80,000 genes in the human body.

John Sulston, director of the centre, has little doubt about the significance of the undertaking. "The human genome is like a computer code: it is the code that runs us, it generates us, it makes us what we are," he says. "This sequence is going to be important as long as there are people in the universe."

Neither does Sulston, a bearded academic in a baggy sweater, harbor any doubts about who should own such vital information: the public. He winces at the fact that private companies have patented human genes, "privatizing" part of mankind's operating

The fast track to cracking the code

The question is: who should own the genetic information underpinning this revolution? Rifkin shares Sulston's conviction that it belongs to the public

instructions. Sulston is unhappy, for instance, that Myriad, a US company, owns BRCA1 and BRCA2, two genes that cause breast cancer. He believes this has artificially raised the price of the diagnostic test for predisposition to breast cancer, and may have slowed research into finding a cure. "I don't think it's to the advantage of patients to have a whole human gene tied up with one corporation."

Jeremy Rifkin, an author and campaigner who keeps a watchful eye on the biotechnology industry, believes ownership of human genes will be a fundamental question of the next century. "Whoever controls the gene controls the next page of history," he says.

He compares gene hunters to gold prospectors, though he says genetic "green gold" will be more valuable than any yellow metal. "This is an extractive industry. Only now we're extracting biological biodiversity."

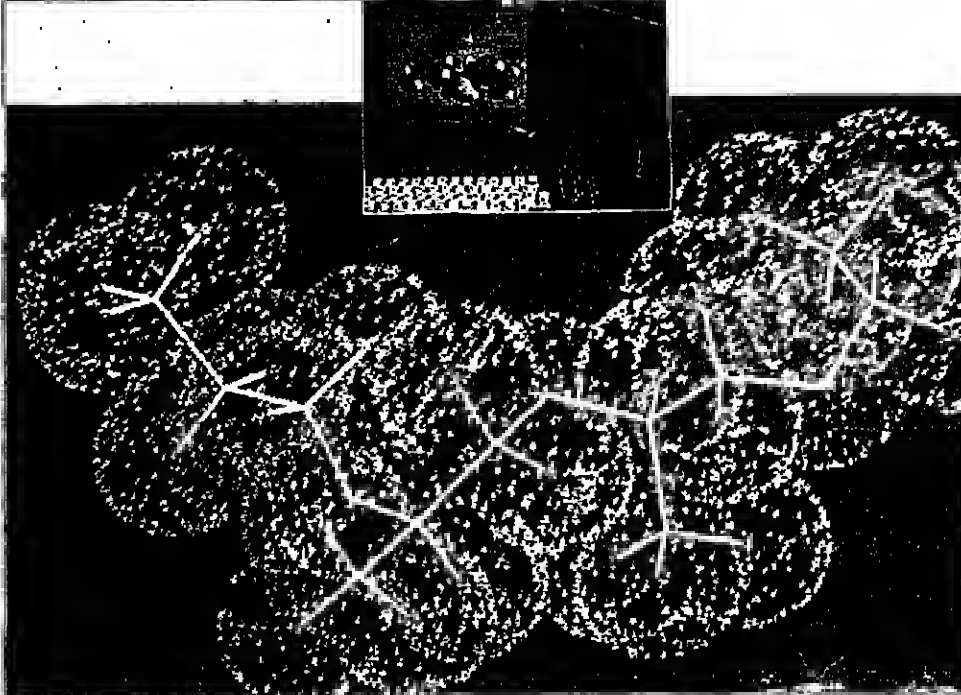
Ever since James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the double-helix structure of DNA in 1953, the role of genes in human health has come into sharper focus. Rapid advances in decoding

the long strings of letters, or nucleotides, that determine a gene's function are helping scientists make the transition from merely describing a disease to understanding its mechanism.

This is already having a colossal impact on the drug discovery process by increasing exponentially the number of disease "targets" at which pharmaceutical companies can take aim. "Suddenly the industry went from famine to feast," says George Poste, chief scientist at Smith Kline Beecham, the UK drugs company, and one of the first people in the industry to grasp the commercial implications of the genome revolution.

New targets are just the start, says Poste. Understanding diseases currently classified and treated as one. Knowledge of an individual's genetic make-up will enable doctors to predict whether a drug will work on a particular patient, reducing expenditure on ineffective treatment and allowing therapies to be more accurately targeted.

Similarly, genetic testing for predisposition to a range of illnesses could become commonplace, and "gene therapy" may allow doctors to replace deficient genes, or



repair defective ones. Some believe medicine will be so transformed that today's therapies will seem like poisonous relics from the scientific Dark Ages.

The question is: who should own the genetic information underpinning this revolution?

Rifkin shares Sulston's conviction that it belongs to the public. By granting patents on genes, he says, "we're opening the floodgates for a handful of corporations to own the entire human gene pool."

William Haseltine, chief executive of Human Genome

Sciences, a Nasdaq-listed company which makes money from patenting genes, has little time for the Rifkins of this world. "Those people who have made a fuss about gene patenting don't know what they're talking about," he says. "It's all a bunch of blather, it's sand in people's eyes."

Patents, says Haseltine, are a tried-and-tested method of recouping the cost of an investment. No new drugs, which cost about \$500 million (£30 million) each to develop, would be invented if companies could not establish intellectual property rights. More important still, patents are a "teaching document", forcing inventors to publish research so that others may learn their art.

To gain a patent, an invention must be novel, and have "utility". He dismisses the suggestion that genes should be treated differently that a patent on a gene is somehow a patent on life itself. "Nobody owns the genes in people, but if I invent a use for a certain gene, I can own that process for 20 years. It's quite routine and ordinary."

The clincher, says Poste, is that if patenting "life" really makes people uneasy, they can take solace in the fact that intellectual protection lasts only 20 years. After that, genes revert to public ownership.

The public-private spat has accelerated the multi-billion-dollar race to unravel the human blueprint. On one side is a plethora of private companies, each seeking to find genetic information of commercial value. On the other hand is the Human Genome Project, financed largely by governments and the Wellcome Trust, the world's richest charity which has com-

pleted only about 6 percent of its task.

It is a bitter race. But one man believes the whole thing can be called off. Craig Venter, a gifted and controversial American microbiologist, says he can crack the entire code on his own. He even believes he can do it in two years and at a fraction of the cost. "I'm saying three years publicly, just in case. But it will be done in two," he says breezily.

From anyone else, such words would be dismissed as the rantings of a fanatic. How could one man hope to beat the combined forces of the US government and the mighty pharmaceutical sector? But if Venter is a fanatic, he is a fanatic with a record.

In the early 1990s, when he was working for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which had begun the Human Genome Project a few years earlier, he invented a short cut to discovering genes known as the expressed sequence tag (EST) method. The NIH refused to fund him. So Venter quit. With Haseltine's Human Genome Sciences. Within months, he had used his method to discover thousands of genes, forcing a mad scramble among his public and private rivals to establish EST labs of their own.

To his admirers, Venter had galvanized a plodding establishment. To his detractors and there are many he used expertise gained at the NIH to turn a quick buck. So controversial has he become that when his name is brought up at the Sanger Centre, one staff member hisses as one would a pantomime villain.

Popular or not, Venter and his ESTs transformed genetics. But he quickly grew bored, turning his attention instead to complete genetic sequences. Again he was after a short cut.

His idea was to bypass the mapping process by which scientists work out how the genome fits together before sequencing each chunk and instead complete the whole operation in one go. Known as the "whole genome shotgun approach", the aim was to break the genome into random pieces, sequence each fragment and then use computer power to reassemble it. Venter started with hemophilus influenzae, a bacterium that causes meningitis.

Failing once more to persuade the NIH to fund him, he thumbed his nose at the establishment when in 1995 he published the bacterium's entire genome in *Science*, a prestigious journal. "Once we had the whole genome we could never go back," he says. "It would be like going from the full orchestra to one instrument-playing part of the score."

Now he wants to play the

most prestigious symphony of all: the human genome. To do so, he has set up a private company called Celera Genomics. Venter claims Celera will work 50 times faster than anyone else by using a "fabulous machine" developed by Perkin-Elmer, the US scientific instrument manufacturer, with enough power to fragment and reassemble the entire 3 billion-letter sequence.

Venter's challenge has galvanized the opposition. In August, Incyte, a Californian biotechnology company, announced it would attempt the same feat. Government sponsors of the Human Genome Project have torn up their original timetable, promising to complete the sequence in 2003, two years earlier than planned.

Sulston is not taking Venter's challenge lightly, though he wonders if his "fabulous machine" will be able to reassemble the genome. Even if it can, he says, the public sector's more painstaking approach will produce a more accurate map. "They admitted in public that what they will be producing is a very bit of thing," he says.

Venter concedes no such thing, quoting one scientist who described the public map as "extremely shifty". The reason his rivals are so worried, he says, is that if he cracks the code they will be out of a job. "You can see why people who have convinced themselves this is a two-decade problem wouldn't be happy to see someone do it in two years."

Near the surface lurks the question of ownership. After all, say critics, if Venter makes good his boast, what is to stop him establishing a monopoly over mankind's operating instructions?

Venter swears he has no such intention. "We will be giving away the entire sequence of the human genome for free," he says. His plan is to release the raw genetic sequence, but to charge for access to a database that will manipulate and interpret the reams of unedited data. "We think we can build an incredibly valuable data set without keeping the human genome secret," he says. "I've been described as the Bill Gates of biotechnology," he goes on. "I don't know whether that's meant to be insulting or flattering. But at least Microsoft doesn't sell its products for \$5 million."

At the Sanger Centre, and in academia, many question Venter's intentions.

"Although he has declared he will release the data, there are no guarantees of that," says Sulston. "The company is obviously run for the benefit of shareholders who may or may not see the release of data as desirable." Venter says he is seeking scientific excellence, not commercial gain. But no one knows if his main motivation is a Nobel prize or a mountain of cash. One thing is clear: if he defies his doubters by cracking the human code, he might just come away with both.

Financial Times Syndication

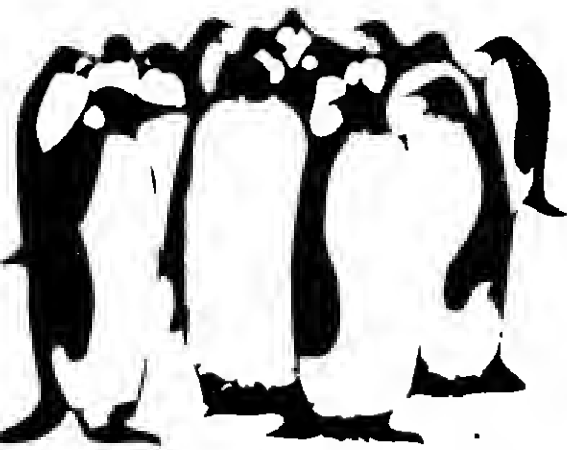
Pongpan Chaimin, a 23-year-old Thai of Mon origin, makes souvenir jars out of well-kneaded clay at his home in Koh Kret, an island community in Nonthaburi outside of Bangkok. Orders pour in for famous Mon terracotta from Koh Kret from gift shops wanting to promote local arts as Koh Kret is located near the district where major Asian Games stadiums are located.

Reuters



05.11.1998

AROUND TOWN



● A GROUP of Jordanian travel agencies held a reception in honor of managers of foreign airlines' offices in Amman for their cooperation with Jordanian travel agents. The event, held on 3 December, included Egypt Air, Emirates Airlines and Austrian Airlines. High ranking public officials and tour managers also attended.



● HRH Prince Faisal attended the Air Pilots and Navigators' annual awards banquet at London's Guildhall, last November. The Prince presented Captain Jack Lowe, the commercial manager of Concorde, with the Brackley Memorial Trophy. The award is for Lowe's outstanding contribution to safe and profitable commercial supersonic flights. Mr Lowe is a British Airways' longest-serving Concorde pilot, and flown more than five million miles on the flagship since 1975, and counts Britain's Queen and PM Tony Blair among his passengers.



Oriental art displayed at the British Council

By Ghassan Joha
Star Staff Writer

THE HOLY LAND is a term full of religious piety. It is the land of the prophets. It was in the 19th century that the area gained importance to the Europeans. In the 18th and 19th century, the expansion of the British Empire and the opening of trade routes to India, facilitated much travel to the region. Amongst the travellers were painters and authors, and numerous books written and dedicated to the Holy Sites.

British 19th century artists graphically displayed an era of a bygone age. About 60 of their works is presently being shown at the British Council in Amman. Those painters include Edward Lear, William Hunt, David Roberts, Carl Haag, David Wilkie and William Bartlett. And there is more. John Dugmore, Tristram Ellis, and Walter Tyndale lavishly display their artistic view of the area at the time.

The exhibition has a distinctive British flavor, setting the painters away from those of their international counterparts who also drew at the time.

The colored paintings espouse natural beauty since they combine the reverence with the historic. The two main attractions for the British painters were then Jerusalem and Petra. The scene of the Old City of Jerusalem dom-

inated western attraction, the case was true of Al Khazne in Petra since the rose-city was more accessible to the traveller.

The first picture in the hall displays a panorama of the old city of Jerusalem. The painting, by William Bartlett, depicts the city and its buildings during the first half of the 19th century.

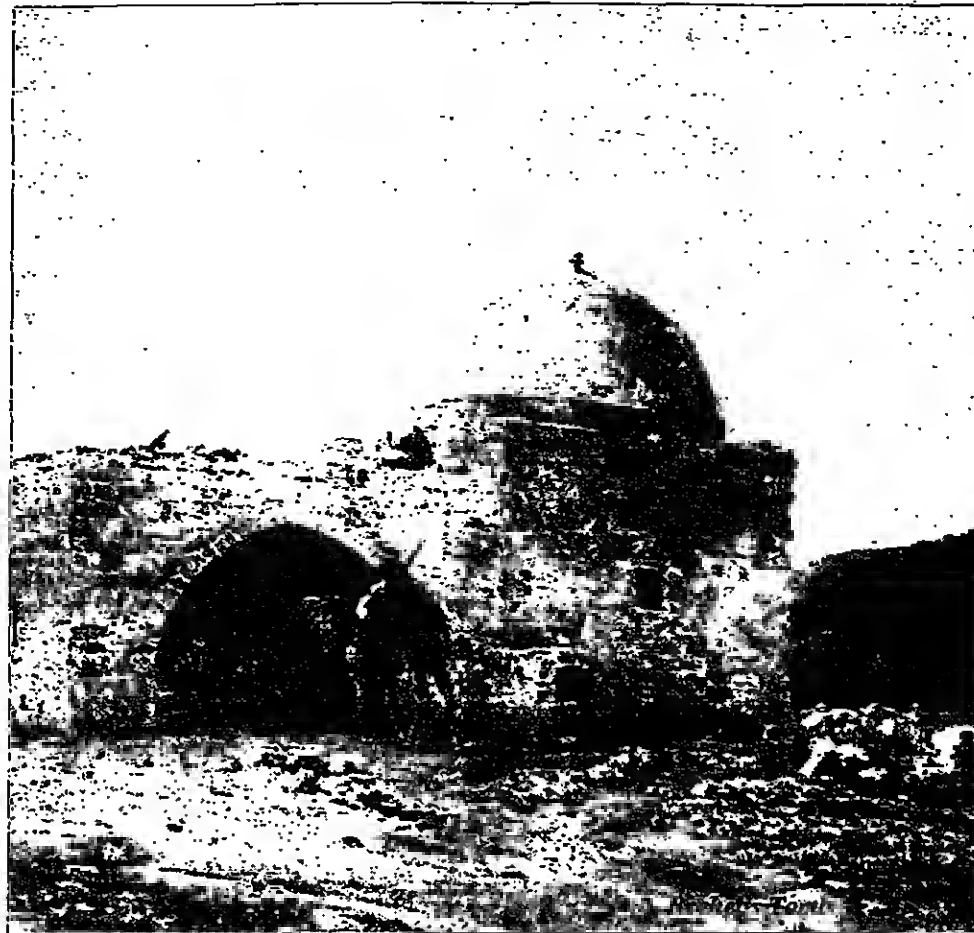
Bartlett, who is well-known for his prolific topographical works, has three landscape paintings. The other two show a modern view of Jerusalem, while the second is an impression of Jaffa, a coastal city from the sea.

But John Dugmore, another topographical painter, ascends high to the Dead Sea and Lake Tiberias. The two paintings made by watercolors, shows the watery surface being embraced with the mountains.

Jerusalem occupies the following watercolored paintings: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Pillar of Absalom, Rachel's Tomb near Bethlehem, and profiles of Jerusalem in the late 19th century.

The Egyptian peninsula of Sinai and its mount were also depicted by Edward Lear, who used ink and washy colors to heighten the site in the beautiful desert.

The paintings also take you to Aqaba where Captain Robert Moresby engaged his thoughts to survey the coast in connection with his plans for an overland route to India. The competent amateur artist used watercolors



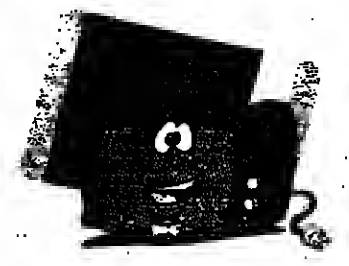
to survive the old spirit of the site.

However, the explicit drawings of David Roberts shows his talent for painting on lithographs. For whom who don't know, lithography is an old process of printing from a metal plate surface.

All of the displayed paintings are original lithographs of the Holy Land series, dating to the mid-1800s, showing Jerusalem, Petra and Aqaba in different profiles.

The owner of these paintings is Dr Hisham Al Khatib. He told *The Star* that sadly most of the visitors to the venue have been foreigners, adding that Arabs should come in increasing numbers to realize that they have a rich history which should be taught and made fully aware of. The exhibition continues till 12 December.

ON THE BOX



Cinema...and See Cinema!

By Ibtihal Ahmad
Special to *The Star*

ARE YOU a regular cinema goer? Would you like to know more about the best films that are available? All you have to do is tune to JTV every Friday night and you can find out the films that are highly rated on the international market, and some of the local ones. Cinema, Cinema, Cinema is an action packed program, that is produced and directed according to the international standards of Hollywood. During the program all you see on the screen is the unfolding of films of films, be it action, drama, romance or science fiction, and even the best rated cartoon films. Audience can really become involved, some might even rush to the nearest cinema to watch some of them, if they are lucky, or rent them out from video stores.

The program does not tell the whole story, it only chooses those parts that will keep viewers interested and intrigued about the rest of the motion picture, or what might have become to some of its leading stars and characters. Cinema, Cinema, Cinema is well produced from start to finish. It kicks off with a powerful musical theme which tells viewers about the goodies that will follow, indeed the program is a mixture of musical hits drawn from the films being reviewed.

The presenter of Cinema, is quite active, as well and at times loses himself in the program even though we only hear his voice. His tone in presentation, and in charting the weekly count down right up to the number one movie in the United States, keeps viewers alert and interested. For instance, one does not feel like having a glass of water during the viewing of Cinema, Cinema.

Viewers can get an idea about what's on local cinemas as well by watching the locally produced, See Cinema, on the Arabic Channel. However, this program has a different style and setting than its counterpart on the foreign Channel. The presenter of See Cinema, who is brought in full view, tends to move around the screen so much that one feels the poor girl is about to fall. She was probably not to be active and lively, but such movement can make the viewer extremely dizzy.

See Cinema is also different because of the way it reviews its top films. It concentrates on its number one movie and centers the program around it, and even goes to the trouble of interviewing the star actor of that film. If the film stays at the number one slot, you can see the star actor being interviewed again and again.

The program shows so many previews of the top film on the Jordanian market, that in the end, one does not need to go out and watch it or rent it out, because the plot, the climax and the ending have all been revealed!

'Empreintes':

An amazing journey of past civilizations

By Louis Ibrahim
Star Staff Writer

A JOURNEY into the past civilizations—we never got to know—is an endearing. A journey of discovery into the history, culture and traditions of nations is a unique experience.

The French Cultural Center's latest exhibition 'Empreintes' (Traces) is just about that. A photography show of 40 exquisite paintings is an itinerary trip. Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Cyprus and Turkey are all included in this long journey.

The photographer starts off in Casablanca, with a photograph of an ancient site dating back to the dawn of history. The artist then goes to Luxor, another city in Morocco to capture a photo of the acropolis (Quarter of Temples) in the first century.

Morocco is featured with grace and harmony through the display of several ancient sites that embrace the dominance of the desert.

Other glaring photos are of Tunisia and Libya. The Byzantine citadel, Temple of the Concord, the Apollonian and Cyrene amphitheatres are some of the main archaeological sites that narrates the early stages of history in these countries.

The colorful photos makes the onlooker stop to check the harmony between the monuments and nature. Egypt on the other hand, is portrayed through the Pharaonic era.

Photos display monuments in Karnak, Saqqara, Cairo and other cities.

As well as this, there are photos of traditional neighborhoods in Cairo displaying old houses and ornamented balconies.

The Levant is another area of focus. The only photo of the East Mediterranean coast of Gaza in Palestine demonstrates its rich history. The photo portrays the Blakhiyeh area with its stones facing the sea waves.

Moving further east, the journey takes us to the rose-red city of Petra, Jordan's jewel in the desert. A photo of Wadi Farasa displaying the tomb of a Roman soldier is highlighted as well. The artist then moves to Jerash, with two photo-



Palmyre in Syria

graphs—one of the sanctuary of Zeus and the other of the South Theatre. The two paintings accentuate the ancient history of this city. Some of the desert castles are also included. The Ummayyad palace of Qusair Amra with its rich mosaic paintings, and the old Nabatean sanctuary of Khirbet Ed-Dareh are strongly highlighted.

The journey moves later to the outskirts of Amman, the old

capital of the Ammonites, where Iraq Al Ameer roars in the middle of the meadow. The site is better known as the panther of the Qasr Al Abed standing there for over 800 years ago. We then move to the north of Jordan to Syria and Lebanon. Syria, is displayed with 15 photographs. Bosra, the palaeostical site in the south, gives a unique demonstration of columns and hard stones. The basaltic stones of

Khirbet El Umbashi in Safa highlights the black stones of the city.

And across the sea you find yourself in Cyprus. The tiny island is highlighted by a photo of a Christian basilica in a large yard of colored stones surrounded with the remains of ancient columns. Larnaca, is the artist's next stop on the island, where water merges with the old medaeval port.

Ending the journey, the photographer takes us to Turkey and more particularly to the stone age in that country. One of the photos embrace the Euphrates, overlooking an antiquity site on the reef of the river. Another photo takes a view of the Apollon sanctuary and an old aqueduct from the first century BC.

'Empreintes' is a true journey of different civilizations that narrates the rich history of people and places that once existed and left impressive traces of their existence. The French Cultural Center's exhibition will run to 17 December.

British Airways holds reception for travel agents

BRITISH AIRWAYS Jordan held a gala reception on Wednesday, 25 November at the prestigious Dunes Club ballroom, introducing the airlines' 150 million new World Traveler Services, which will be phased in Jordan by the start of the new millennium.

Attending the reception were travel agents from various agencies in Amman, including journalists from major local publications.

The event began with an introductory speech by Saad Jaber, Sales and Marketing Manager, British Airways Jordan, followed by a demonstration video, displaying British Airways' most comprehensive range of new services and benefits, with a range of industry 'firsts' on the ground and in the air, offering greater comfort, increased flexibility, and more value for money.

Jaber said: 'This was a very



BRITISH AIRWAYS

successful event, in that it promoted British Airways' continuous dedication to passenger comfort and 'family friendly' approach. The new World Traveler service prove that the answer lies in listening to passengers, and providing them with real, practical improve-

ments. I believe this airline's innovative ideas and unique services will keep it a cut above the rest."

The reception also included fun activities and prize giveaways, followed by a fancy buffet dinner and a quiz on the airline's various services.

Innovative sampling style from Nescafé in Jordan



SAMPLING TAKES a new twist in Jordan as a roving team of youngsters dispense cups of fresh Nescafé using the latest in sampling technology from Europe—the backpack dispenser.

The sampling team, who are causing quite a stir in busy locations throughout Jordan are part of an innovative country wide sampling programme by Nescafé. Easily identifiable in their trendy branded sport wear, the teams can be spotted at a number of locations including the Jordan University, the University of Applied Sciences, Al Fubais Walk, Rosary College and Amman Academy School.

One Student from the JU, welcomed the innovative sampling style and said: "I had a busy morning studying and a complimentary cup of Nescafé was really welcome. The backpack look great and the sampling team were very friendly and energetic."

JUST ARRIVED

KOOKAI®
FASHION INTERNATIONAL
www.cns.com.jo/kookai

WINTER 99
SHMEISANI collection

After a very Hot summer and a very HOT SALE which reached up to 70% off on most of its unique pieces, KOOKAI Fashion International in Shmeisani, at Adli Center, (above Houston's Restaurant) announces the start of winter with the arrival of its NEW WINTER COLLECTION '99. The new collection which comes all the way from the famous KOOKAI house of fashion in Paris to the elegant lady of Jordan includes a variety of the latest striking French winter designs for that executive and elegant look the modern woman desires. A wide collection of winter coats, executive suits, casual daily wear, accessories and a lot more is waiting for you ladies at KOOKAI Fashion Shmeisani with quality and prices to your liking as usual, not to mention the 30 - 50% discount that is still going on on all of last winter's collection...so come along and shop with style for this festive season!

AGENDA

Exhibition

■ The British Council is currently showing a special exhibition titled 'The Holy Land', which commemorates the golden jubilee of the British Council in Jordan. The exhibition lasts till 12 December.

■ An exhibition of 30 oil paintings by the Iraqi renowned artist Ali Najjar, is showing at the Instituto Cervantes, and lasts till 14 December.

■ The French Cultural Center is hosting a special exhibition of photographs displaying the journey from Morocco to Turkey. The exhibition continues till 17 December.

■ The exhibition of delightful photographs, titled 'Windows and Doors', is currently showing at the Baladna Art Gallery, at Wafsi Al Tei street. The photos, taken by Hani Hourani, end their display on 18 December.

■ In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a special exhibition is being opened today, Thursday, 10 December, at the Amman City Hall in Ras Al Ain area. The exhibition, held under the auspices of the French Cultural Center, continues till 18 December.

■ The American Center features a poster exhibition marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The exhibition, which includes 30 posters reflecting the history of human rights movement in the US, will be on display until 30 December.

■ The 10th anniversary exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists, is currently showing at Darat Al Foun, Jabal Al Weidheh, until 28 January 1999.

Lecture

■ The Darat Al Foun will host two art meetings during this week. Today, 10 December, the New York-based Palestinian artist Samia

Halaby is featuring 'Computer Art in Cinematography', while on 17 December Iraqi artist Ismael Fattah and critic Kifah Habib will share a talk meeting. Both events will be held at 5:30 pm.

■ In celebrating the 50th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the American Center hosts a seminar titled 'A Comparative Approach to the Rule of Law in Developing Countries', on 14 December at 5 pm. The lecture, will be delivered by lawyer Steve Mayo, director of the Institute for the Study and Development of Legal Systems in San Francisco. The Center also will host a special program titled 'Interfaith Celebration', on 21 December at 8 pm. Reservations are required by 17 December.

Film

■ The European Film Festival is currently on display at the Royal Cultural Center. The festival, which shows different types of movies from Europe, will last until 18 December.

■ The British Council will show the movie 'Little Women', starring Winona Ryder and Gabriel Byrne, on 15 December, at 6 pm.

■ The American Center is showing the Christmas Box, today, Thursday, 10 December. It stars Richard Thomas and Maureen O'Hara. The movie begins at 5 pm.

Concert

■ On celebrating the Christmas and the New Year, The Instituto Cervantes hosts a theatrical performance by the Olé group, on 16 December, at 6 pm.

■ The Goethe Institut will host The German Gaude Trio in a special concert today, Thursday, 10 December at 8 pm. The concert, includes Daniel Gaude (violin), Thomas Seiditz (violin) and Andreas Greger (cello), and will be held at the Terra Sancta Cultural Center.

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV2
from 12 — 18 December

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Animaniacs (Cart.)
3:30—The Adventure of the
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)
4:30—Peer Pressure (Doc.)
5:00—French Progs.
6:10—Wind at my back
7:15—News in French
7:30—French Prog.
7:35—News Headlines
8:00—Murphy Brown
8:30—Today's Health
8:30—The Fretender (Drama)
9:15—ABC of Democracy
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—Twisted

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pink Panther (Cart.)
3:20—Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Adventures of the
Black Stallion
4:00—Big Cat Diary (Doc.)
4:30—Vid Kids
5:00—The American Chart
Show
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—The Brittas Empire
8:00—French Program
8:30—Walker Texas ranger
(Police Drama)
9:05—Farming & Ecology
9:30—Behind the Scene
10:00—News in English
10:30—Melissa (Mini-series)
11:20—Doogie Howser

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Batman (Cartoon)
3:30—David Copperfield
(Children Drama)
4:00—Neighbors (Drama)



The Simpsons, Friday at 6:30 pm.

4:30—French Program
6:10—Wind At My Back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Parethood (Comedy)
8:00—The Internet Café
8:30—Big Sky
9:20—Encounter
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—F.X.—The Illusion

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—French Cartoon
3:30—Bananas in Pyjamas
(Children Drama)
4:00—Life Choices (Doc.)
4:30—Small Talk

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of
Teddy Ruxpin

THURSDAY

3:30—Halfway Across The
Galaxy & Turn Left
4:30—Masters Of The Maze
5:00—French Program
6:15—Wind At My Back
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—(2 Point 4Children)
8:00—Envy Special
8:50—N.Y.P.D.
9:30—Great Moments Of
Science & Technology
9:40—Faces & Places
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—The Cover Story
11:15—The Album Show

FRIDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Superman (Cartoon)
3:30—Space Precinct (Sci-fi)
4:20—The Science Show
5:00—French Program
6:25—Sparks (comedy)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Family Matters
(comedy)
8:00—Museums of The
World (Doc.)
8:30—Dr. Quinn—The
Medicine Woman (Drama)
9:10—Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Film:
12:00—Dudley (Comedy)

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Moby Dick (Cart.)
3:30—Treasure Hunt
4:00—French Film
6:30—The Simpsons (Cart.)
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Prog.
7:30—News Headlines

7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Ancient-voices (Doc.)
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The X Files (Drama)
11:15—The Halifax

PROGRAMMES

EN FRAN AIS

SAMEDI

17:00—Fant pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique

MARDI

18:00—Les centres brûlés
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

17:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6
20:00—Envoyé spécial

JEUDI

16:00—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

VENDREDI

18:15—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—AB6 la Terre

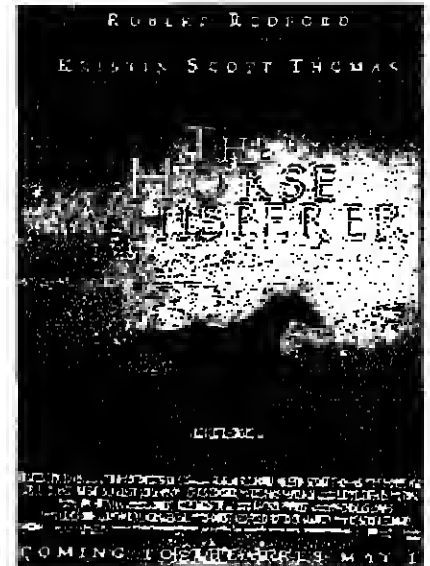
Programs are subject to change by JTV



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): Red Corner
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): White Squall
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): The Mask Of Zorro
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Saeedi At The American University (Arabic)
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Black Dog
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): French Kiss

Top Corner



Top 10 Rentals

- The Mask Of Zorro
- Armageddon
- Blade
- Horse Whisperer
- Snake Eyes
- Dangerous Beauty
- Sliding Doors
- There Is Something About Mary
- Out Of Sight
- The Mighty

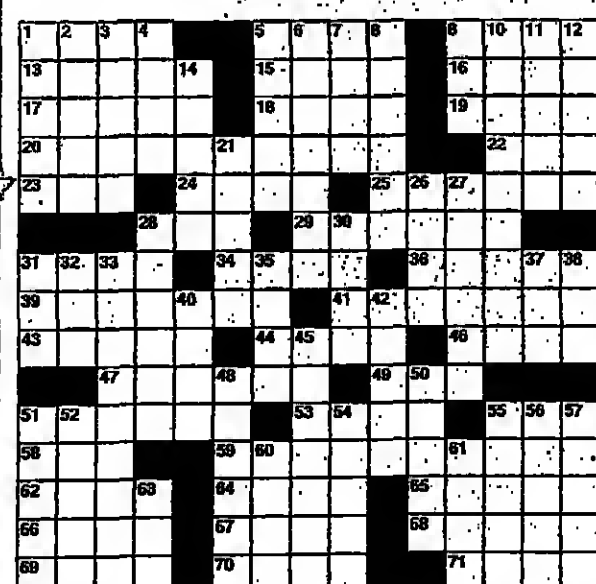
Top 10 Original

- The Siege
- Titanic
- Dance With Me
- Amistad
- Desperate Measure
- The Parent Trap
- Six Days-Seven Nights
- Seven Years In Tibet
- Jackal
- The Game

VIDEO PLAZA

4th Circle opposite Belgium Embassy. Tel. 5930054
Open daily from 12:00 — 9:30

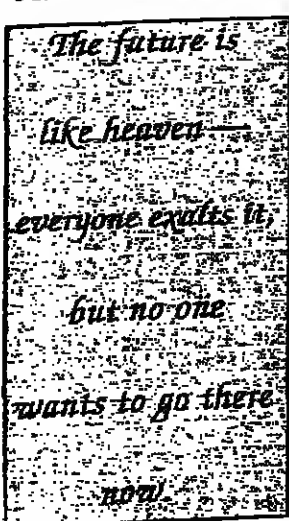
CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
- 1 Mince
 - 5 Charity
 - 13 Underworld god
 - 15 Heartfelt
 - 17 Goddess of youth
 - 18 Vanguard
 - 19 Mercantile slouch
 - 20 Pre-med course abbr.
 - 21 Gold rush participant
 - 22 Cpl.
 - 23 Amusement
 - 24 French novelist
 - 25 Alarm signal
 - 26 "volute"
 - 27 Inner decay
 - 31 Cornered
 - 34 Just average
 - 36 Roastin'
 - 39 More bewary
 - 41 Broadcast
 - 43 Devoured
- DOWN**
- 44 Plane surface
 - 46 Difficult to pin down
 - 47 Stout
 - 49 180
 - 51 Feared
 - 53 Averse or hostile
 - 55 Farrow of time
 - 56 Paddle
 - 58 America's Cup champ
 - 62 Calamitous
 - 64 Put forth
 - 65 Tropical fruit
 - 66 Helmsman
 - 67 Creaper
 - 68 Fur merchant
 - 69 Metallic element
 - 70 Actor
 - 72 Switch
 - 71 Escorted

OFF THE WALL

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THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: This is the last week the sun is in Scorpio this year. Soon it will go into Sagittarius. That's the official start of the party season.

Aries (March 21-April 19). You want things to go one way, and they appear to be taking just the opposite turn. Planning is the key to your success.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Handle paperwork. It looks like there's something in that stack that is overdue by now.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). It looks like a conversation you get into could make you forget just about everything but romance.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). It looks like you'd rather stay home and cuddle with the one you love. Actually, somebody at home may be feeling a little sick, so maybe you can use that as an excuse.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). If there's any information you need, you'd better ask about it now. The chances of getting a straight answer are good now.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). This is a good time to learn about money. Focus attention on your finances. Whip those into shape and write up a budget you can live with.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you're careful about what you say, you'll be able to achieve your ends through negotiation. That should be your objective.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's some sort of paperwork you're supposed to have turned in. Better go ahead and do that.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Looks like friends need some attention and you're willing to provide it. You'd rather go and play than take care of business.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You may have trouble with a person in authority. This person doesn't seem to be able to make a decision. You may just have to take control.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your heart isn't in your work. It's off, following the horizon somewhere. You'd rather be just about anywhere else than stuck in whatever you're doing.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Looks like there's some paperwork you forgot. If you haven't looked through that stack for a while, you might be surprised to see some bills you forgot you had.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Start off this year by taking care of old business. After you get that out of the way, you're going to take off like a rocket.

Bridge

Test Your Play

By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
 ♠ K J 3
 ♥ A Q 5
 ♦ A K 5 2
 ♣ J 10 5

WEST ♠ 10 7

EAST ♠ 9 8 6

52 ♥ 10 9 8 7 ♥ J 4 3

♦ 9 3 ♦ Q J 10 8 7

♣ Q 9 7 6 4 ♣ Void

SOUTH ♠ A Q 4

♥ K 6 2

♦ 6 4

♣ A K 8 3 2

The bidding:

South West North East

1NT Pass 6NT Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♣

Cover up the East and West hands with your thumbs. Now decide how you would play six no trump after the lead of a heart.

The auction is a matter of simple arithmetic, regardless of whether your no-trump range is 15-17 or 16-18. North does not have enough to

think of inviting a grand slam and should settle for a jump to six no trump.

After a heart lead, declarer can count eight tricks in spades, hearts and diamonds, so needs only four tricks in clubs. Indeed, that would be a simple matter if clubs were no worse than 4-1. But what if clubs break 5-0?

Suppose you win the first trick in dummy and lead the jack of clubs? When East shows out on the first club, you can only collect three tricks in the suit, and your slam fails. Try it. The same applies if you cash a high club at trick two.

The correct line is to win the first trick in hand and lead a low club. West cannot afford to rise with the queen, so the table's ten wins. Return to hand with a spade and lead another club and, whether West puts up the queen or again plays low, you are assured of four club tricks.

What if West shows out on the first club? East captures the ten with the queen but, after cashing the jack when you regain the lead, you have a marked finesse against East's nine. Making six odd.

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Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RIBBE

INORM

EXVONC

CLINEP

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Jumbles: BRIBE MINOR CONVEX PENCIL

ENIT

Answer: A good way for birds to communicate

NO —

Answer: A good way for birds to communicate

Answer: A good way for birds to communicate

Answer: A good way for birds to communicate

Answer: A good way for birds to communicate

Answer: A good way for birds to communicate

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Coca-Cola employees receive achievements awards

Coca-Cola Jordan held an awards ceremony at the Coca-Cola headquarters in Al-Hizam, honouring employees with outstanding achievement in the Sales and Marketing department. Those honoured included Coca-Cola plant supervisors, assistants, distributors, and staff members. The awards were handed out following a challenging two month competition that began in September 1998, which monitored the Sales and Marketing of Coca-Cola products in the Jordanian market.

Sandy Allan, General Manager, Coca-Cola Middle East and North Africa, attended the ceremony, while Mark Tully, Region Manager, Coca-Cola Near East, presented the winners with their awards, and commended them on their outstanding achievements and ongoing efforts in maintaining Coca-Cola's unique global standards.

Azem Omar Yousef, general manager, Coca-Cola Jordan, gave an encouraging word to the Coca-Cola employees, adding that the Coca-Cola Company will continue organizing such competitions, allowing more opportunities for employees to shine through.

In addition, Coca-Cola Jordan held a training workshop, introducing employees to new skills, and helping them understand more about marketing techniques at the point of sale. Sales and marketing experts from the region attended the five-day workshop, to share their expertise.

The Coca-Cola employees received their awards at the ceremony, which was held at the Coca-Cola headquarters in Al-Hizam. The awards were presented to the winners by Mark Tully, Region Manager, Coca-Cola Near East, and Sandy Allan, General Manager, Coca-Cola Middle East and North Africa.

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

• L'Etat palestinien: objectif mai 1999

Les Palestiniens ont déjà un drapeau, un aéroport international, un parlement et un gouvernement, et même des passeports. Mais le Premier ministre israélien Benjamin Netanyahu s'est fixé un objectif: les empêcher d'appeler leur patrie un Etat. Même si beaucoup d'Israéliens, y compris dans sa propre coalition de droite, y voient une bataille d'arrière-garde. Le dirigeant palestinien Yasser Arafat est déterminé à "mettre tout en oeuvre" pour proclamer, le 4 mai 1999, un Etat indépendant sur la Cisjordanie et la bande de Gaza, avec Jérusalem-est pour capitale. L'échéance a été fixée il y a cinq ans: c'est à cette date que doit expirer la période intermédiaire d'autonomie définie par les accords d'Oslo, signés en 1993. M. Netanyahu a riposté avec une menace: si M. Arafat proclamait l'indépendance, Israël annulerait purement et simplement les territoires occupés qu'il contrôle encore - la plus grande part - et étranglerait économiquement le reste. Analystes israéliens et palestiniens concordent sur un point: un tel scénario a toutes les chances de conduire à un bain de sang. A première vue, pourtant, une déclaration d'indépendance palestinienne serait essentiellement symbolique. En mai, l'Autorité palestinienne de M. Arafat contrôlerait, au mieux, des enclaves séparées les unes des autres totalisant 40% de la Cisjordanie, ainsi que 60% de la bande de Gaza. Israël aura toujours la mainmise sur le reste des territoires occupés, y compris Jérusalem-est, et contrôlera l'ensemble des accès terrestres, aériens et maritimes aux zones relevant de l'Autorité palestinienne. Mais l'Autorité escompte - et Israël craint - une large reconnaissance de la communauté internationale, ce qui forcerait l'Etat juif à accepter la nouvelle réalité ou à choisir une isolation croissante sur la scène diplomatique. Pour contrer ce risque, M. Netanyahu a lancé une campagne visant à sensibiliser la communauté internationale aux "dangers" qui seraient posés, selon lui, par l'existence même d'un Etat palestinien aux côtés d'Israël. Le Premier ministre ne manque pas une occasion d'évoquer l'image d'un nouveau Saddam Hussein "à notre porte" ou de missiles anti-aériens déployés en Cisjordanie et pointés sur les avions de ligne atterrissant à l'aéroport Ben Gourion de Tel-Aviv. M. Netanyahu est prêt à accorder une large autonomie aux Palestiniens dans leurs villes et villages mais il entend qu'Israël conserve le contrôle de la majorité de la Cisjordanie, de ses sources d'eau, de ses frontières et de son espace aérien. Et, bien sûr, de Jérusalem.

Éclaboussures

Deux presses, deux mesures

Quatre ans après l'établissement de l'Autorité dans les territoires palestiniens, on ne trouve toujours pas de journaux palestiniens ou israéliens dans les kiosques d'Amman. Irhidi ou Aqaba, ce qui est tout de même étonnant lorsqu'on se souvient des déclarations officielles jordaniennes palestiniennes, et le désir de "développer la compréhension entre les peuples de la région". Certes, les citoyens des différents pays regardent les uns la télévision des autres, mais quid de mieux que les journaux et publications pour mieux connaître le frère ou la voisine? "C'est une question politique", affirme un fonctionnaire du Département des publications, avant de renvoyer sur le cabinet du Ministre de l'Information. En vain, il est pratiquement impossible de s'adresser à celui-ci, et le sentiment général est que l'on ne désire pas s'exprimer sur ce sujet pour des raisons quelque peu "obscurcs".

"Il n'y a pas d'accords entre les autorités compétentes dans le domaine de l'information", affirme quant à lui un spécialiste des affaires israéliennes. Mais les réponses sont évasives et il est vain d'essayer d'en savoir plus. "Je ne sais pas", est presque un refrain, et les réponses commencent à se répéter: "Qui ne les lire en Jordanie?" sont également légions. Mais dès qu'on évoque des publications anglophones comme le Jerusalem Post, on n'a que le silence en écho.

Selon plusieurs voyageurs, on confisque toute publication palestinienne ou israélienne à la traversée du pont. On aurait pu comprendre ce type de pratique avant 1994, mais aujourd'hui...? Le mystère est total. Pourtant un grand nombre de Palestiniens s'intéressent à l'actualité jordanienne, soit parce qu'ils y ont vécu auparavant, soit parce qu'ils y ont de la famille. Soit tout simplement pour des raisons culturelles, économiques ou commerciales.

Par ailleurs, comparés aux journaux palestiniens, les journaux jordaniens sont plus riches en informations, mieux confectionnés, et touchent à un large éventail de sujets, et y publient des points de vue qui attestent d'un "pluralisme politique" certain, malgré la loi sur les publications. Rappelons que la presse égyptienne est en libre circulation dans les Territoires, ainsi qu'en Israël, ce qui confirme qu'il s'agit bien d'une question politique. De plus, nombreux sont les Jordaniens d'origine palestinienne qui désirent pouvoir lire "leur" presse le jour même ou le lendemain de sa parution, chose légitime puisque les distances (géographiques) ne sont pas grandes entre les deux pays. L'ouverture de l'aéroport de Gaza, la semaine dernière, pourrait résoudre ce problème. Quant aux journaux israéliens, en plus de l'hostilité grandissante des Jordaniens à l'égard de la relation avec Israël, il est possible que la diffusion de quelques exemplaires n'intéresse tout simplement pas les distributeurs. Reste un seul moyen d'avoir accès, dans chaque pays, aux publications et aux revues de l'autre: l'Internet. Mais cet moyen de diffusion reste restreint à l'élite. Toujours elle.

Suleiman Sweiss

Chrétiens en Jordanie

Une intégration réussie

Les quelque 5% de Chrétiens de Jordanie occupent une place dans la société et dans la vie politique que pourraient envier les Coptes, les Chaldéens ou les Syriques. Si l'égalité totale n'existe pas en matière de religion, les Chrétiens de Jordanie sont représentés à hauteur de 10% au Parlement. Une représentation à la mesure de leur place dans la société.

Seule un peu moins de 5% de la population jordanienne est chrétienne. Mais le fait d'appartenir à une petite minorité religieuse n'empêche nullement les Chrétiens de prendre une part active à la vie du Royaume Hachémite, et leur intégration dans la société semble réelle.

Bénéficiant d'une présence au Parlement fixée à 9 sièges sur 80, ils prennent part à la vie politique, avec une importance qui est sans rapport avec leur position démographique. Car pour 5% de la population, ils ont un parti représentatif de près de 10%. En Jordanie, explique Geraldine Chatelard, chercheuse en sciences sociales, la représentation parlementaire des Chrétiens est significative de la place qu'ils ont dans la société, et non de leur nombre. Il n'y a pas, comme en Egypte

ou dans d'autres pays de la région, de débats sur les données démographiques des chrétiens. Car si la Constitution reconnaît l'islam comme la religion d'Etat, elle reconnaît du même coup les minorités religieuses en tant que telles et leur accorde donc une place dans la vie politique. Au sein même des relations entre partis politiques l'animosité ne semble pas de mise. "Il est même arrivé que des candidats de la gauche chrétienne fassent des alliances avec des candidats islamistes", rappelle le chercheur.

Une présence occidentale favorable

Régulièrement, des ministres chrétiens en charge, par exemple, du budget des Affaires

étrangères, de la justice ou des finances.

De plus les tribus chrétiennes, dont la taille est d'ordinaire plus petite que celles de leur homologues musulmans, jouent un rôle important dans l'armée et nombre de leurs membres y occupent des fonctions de cadres. "Souvent, poursuit Geraldine Chatelard, les Chrétiens se plaignent du fait que, par exemple, jamais l'un d'entre eux ne pourra accéder au poste de général en chef des armées, ce qui est sans doute vrai. Mais ce qui est vrai pour la Jordanie l'est également dans la plupart des pays."

La présence occidentale est également un facteur important de l'intégration de la minorité chrétienne. En effet, les entreprises et les institutions (ambassades, consulats, etc.) occidentales présentes sur les territoires jordaniens ont en général ten-

dance à "favoriser" les chrétiens dont ils se sentent plus proches culturellement. "Il est étonnant de voir, souligne Geraldine Chatelard, que, par exemple, les concessionnaires jordaniens des marques automobiles européennes sont très souvent chrétiens." Mais il reste vrai qu'historiquement, ces derniers ont souvent eu un enseignement des langues étrangères plus approfondi que celui de leurs compatriotes musulmans.

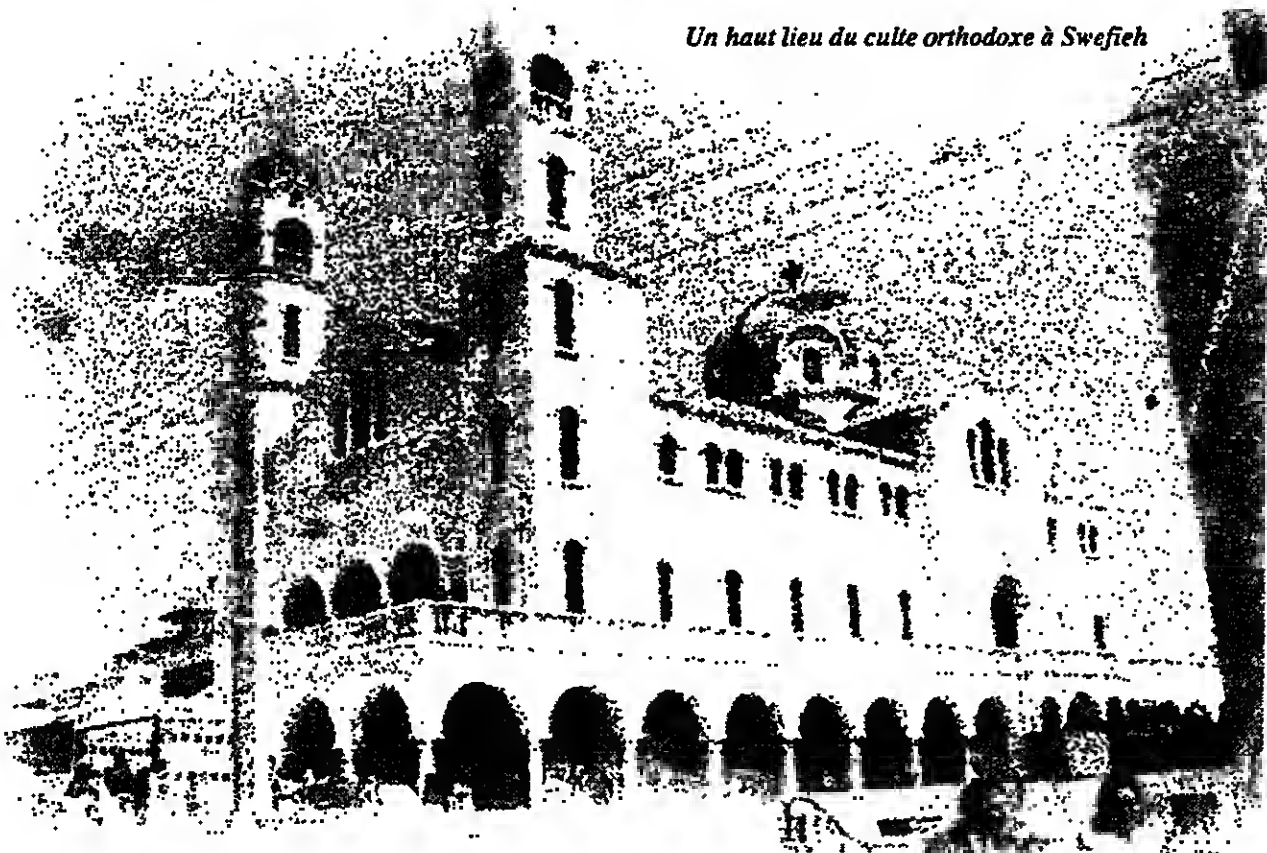
Pas d'égalité totale

Cependant, malgré une intégration à la société qui semble réussie, il reste que Chrétiens et Musulmans ne jouent pas à égalité totale en matière de religion. Ainsi, si le changement officiel de religion est possible dans un sens, il est illégal - et

théoriquement puni - de mort - dans l'autre. Il est donc possible pour un Chrétien de devenir musulman, sans que l'inverse ne soit autorisé. Ceci n'étant toutefois pas propre à la Jordanie mais à tous les pays islamiques. De même les mariages interconfessionnels sont souvent comme issue la conversion du non musulman ou tout du moins le fait que les enfants embrassent l'islam et non la religion chrétienne. De plus, le gouvernement n'accorde pas de subventions (voir ci-dessous) pour la construction des églises comme il le fait pour les mosquées. "Au mieux, explique Geraldine Chatelard, il fournit la terre et les communautés doivent elles-mêmes trouver les fonds nécessaires à la construction." Cependant, les projets de construction d'une église maronite à Am-

man montrent que la taille de la communauté n'empêche aucunement la reconnaissance de cette dernière. Le nombre de familles de confession maronite n'atteint en effet qu'une petite centaine, ce qui n'entrave rien à la liberté des intérêts de pratiquer leur culte.

Amineh Ishtay



Un haut lieu du culte orthodoxe à Sweifeh

Chrétiens en Jordanie

En transit

De nombreux Chrétiens irakiens partent chercher refuge en Jordanie. De là, certains d'entre eux tentent un exil vers l'Occident dont la religion dominante les rend proches. Le Jourdain relate l'histoire de deux d'entre eux.

En inscrivant, pendant la Guerre du Golfe, "Dieu est grand" sur son drapeau, Saddam n'avait trompé personne. Malgré l'inspiration profondément laïque de son parti, il avait voulu faire d'une guerre contre l'Occident, une guerre sainte. Et si Tarek Aziz, le vice premier ministre irakien, est chrétien et que ses coreligionnaires n'ont jamais été inquiétés, ni par le pouvoir baathiste, ni par le reste de la population, les choses changent. La misère est, pour les chrétiens religieux, un terrain fertile. Depuis la guerre et l'embargo, les chrétiens d'Irak ne sont plus considérés de la même façon par le reste de la population et, dans les régions où ils ne représentent qu'une faible proportion, ils ne bénéficient plus de la solidarité communautaire qui permet la survie. De nombreux Chaldéens, Catholiques ou Orthodoxes, viennent trouver en Jordanie un refuge - souvent temporaire - à l'embargo et à la méfiance qu'ils suscitent désormais dans leur pays. "Je suis arrivé en 94, confie B., un Chaldéen jadis étudiant en mathématiques à Bagdad. Je n'ai

jamais été réellement persécuté, poursuit-il, mais l'abandon des bourgeois devenait de plus en plus problématique pour les chrétiens. La pression syndicale islamique est devenue, ces dernières années, de plus en plus forte dans les universités... Avec J., un compatriote et coreligionnaire qu'il a rencontré en Jordanie, il tient aujourd'hui une petite échoppe dans une ville du nord d'Amman. Au milieu des paquets de lessives, des jouets bon marché "made in china" et des caisses de sodas, J. raconte: "J'étais soldat et, à mon retour de la guerre, je n'ai pas retrouvé ma famille. Tous ont été tués dans les bombardements." Frappés chirurgicalement et scalpel rouillé.

Bien qu'il se soit battu pour l'Irak contre l'Iran puis, plus tard, contre la coalition internationale, J. dit détester le dicta-

teur baathiste. "On fait croire que tous les Irakiens adulent Saddam, ajoute J., mais c'est faux. Les gens que l'on voit manifester à la télévision avec des photos de Saddam sont tous payés."

Devant la difficulté à reconstruire quelque chose dans un pays dévasté, où l'intégrisme islamique est galopant, J. décide de partir en Jordanie pour, ensuite, émigrer vers l'Occident. Mais aucun des deux ne veut évoquer sa situation légale dans le Royaume Hachémite. On-ils des papiers? Sont-ils enregistrés par le département de l'immigration? Il y a tout à parier que non, même s'ils refusent absolument de se prononcer sur la question. Quant à un éventuel retour en Irak, les deux hommes ne l'envisagent même pas et ne voient en la Jordanie rien d'autre qu'un simple transit. De là ils rêvent de repartir vers

l'Europe ou l'Australie. Dans cette petite ville du nord d'Amman, ils disent être une petite cinquantaine dans cette situation mais, assurent-ils, les Irakiens en transit, qu'ils affirment être "majoritairement chrétiens", sont très nombreux à Amman et dans tout le nord du pays.

A plusieurs reprises, ils se sont rendus dans les ambassades occidentales pour obtenir un visa, mais le passeport irakien équivalait bien souvent à trouver portes closes. Mais le désespoir n'a pourtant pas cours. "Je connais des Irakiens qui ont réussi à avoir un visa pour un pays d'Europe, affirme J., l'un était médecin et l'autre vétérinaire. Mais personne ne connaît les raisons pour lesquelles le visa est accepté ou refusé." Le soir vient sur la petite ville du nord d'Amman, les derniers clients de la petite échoppe vont et viennent. L'étudiant en mathématiques et l'ancien soldat sont assis au milieu des cartons. Ils papotent de leur pays perdu et rêvent à celui qu'ils ne trouveront pas.

Le Jourdain

Chrétiens en Jordanie

Les meilleurs ennemis ?

S'il n'existe pas de réels problèmes entre Chrétiens et Musulmans, les différentes communautés ne s'accordent pas toujours et se soupçonnent parfois de prosélytisme.

Les oppositions des clergés des différentes confessions chrétiennes apparaissent à bien des égards comme la seule véritable tension dans la communauté chrétienne de Jordanie. Il existe en Jordanie neuf communautés chrétiennes distinctes et reconnues. Mais les trois principales - par leur nombre - sont celles des Grecs orthodoxes, des Catholiques romains (ou Latins) et des Grecs catholiques (ou Melchites). Leurs différences ne s'arrêtent pas aux seules questions de cultes: les Melchites revendiquent une arabe qui n'est pas le grec orthodoxe. De plus, les différences de moyens financiers qui existent entre les communautés ne font qu'attiser la méfiance et le peur du prosélytisme éventuel de l'autre. Car si la conversion d'un musulman est impossible, celle d'un autre chrétien l'est tout à fait. Ainsi, les Latins bénéficient d'un soutien financier de leurs plus hautes autorités qui leur permet, par exemple, de disposer de plus d'écoles que leur compatriotes orthodoxes qui en ont quelque peu irrités. D'autant que le patriarcat grec de Jérusa-

lem est accusé de délaisser quelque peu les fidèles à l'est du Jourdain. Cependant, les tensions n'existent pas réellement dans la population elle-même et de nombreux mariages entre Chrétiens de différentes confessions sont chaque année constatés. Les réelles divergences se situent au niveau des autorités ecclésiastiques.

"Les représentants des diverses communautés chrétiennes ont mis plusieurs années pour s'entendre sur le programme d'éducation religieuse réservée aux écoliers chrétiens"

De plus, outre les divergences confessionnelles, le problème se pose parfois en

terme d'origines, suivant que l'on est issu d'une tribu "transjordanienne" ou que l'on est réfugié palestinien.

Depuis la fin de la Guerre du Golfe, un nouveau phénomène est apparu, explique Geraldine Chatelard. "Des églises protestantes américaines viennent faire du prosélytisme en Jordanie, et recrutent, chose étrange, parmi les réfugiés irakiens." Elles bénéficient de gros moyens financiers, ce qui leur permet de proposer, par exemple, des financements pour aller étudier dans les universités américaines. "Peut-être feront-elles souche dans la région et peut-être viendront-elles s'ajouter à la multitude de confessions qui caractérisent la minorité chrétienne."

Le Jourdain (avec Sammy Abbadi)

Du neuf dans Le Jourdain

Vous avez aimé ou détesté un article ou un dossier? Envoyez vos réactions par mail à : le-jourdain@eudoramil.com Une rubrique "Courrier des lecteurs" devrait ainsi voir le jour dans nos colonnes.

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul-Hamid Addasi

Basketballers want to hoop



By Abdul Hamid Addasi
Special to the Star

SPORTS FANS set their chairs, prepared the pop corn and put on their TV sets. The big event is about to begin. It's time for the 13th Asian Games, which started this week in Bangkok.

Jordanian athletes are ready to take part in the competition. A number of 38 athletes are taking part in 11 individual sports. I wonder where the Jordanian basketball team will be in all this?

I was 12-years-old when I first witnessed the achievements of Jordan that came fourth in Basketball competition in the 1986 Asian Games, which was held in Korea. I still remember Jordan's match against the Koreans.

We were two points ahead, till the last two minutes, when they won the match supported by their spectators by only

four points margin 98-94.

It was the best result achieved against S. Korea, the current Asian champions.

The image now is much different, a group of talented players who don't have a professional coach, unfulfilling results in the Arab and Asian championships, bad management, and some personal interests that affect our national team's reputation, which we had in the past years.

As Jordan's Basketball team is preparing itself for the next Pan Arab Games, which are to be held in Amman next year, we hope that the Jordanian Basketball Federation will rectify the game's track, and put the gold medal as a primary goal. I hope that they would remind us of the first Arab achievement, where Jordan defeated Iraq to clinch the 5th Pan Arab Games title in Morocco in 1985.

Sulayem wins 11th Rally Crown

DUBAI—Mohammed bin Sulayem maintained his dominance of the Dubai International Rally last Friday by winning his home event for the 11th time in 14 years, while fellow UAE driver Sheikh Abdullah Al Qasimi clinched his first Middle East success.

Completing an emphatic start-to-finish victory, Sulayem rounded off his tenth Middle East Championship winning season in style to underline his supremacy in the regional series.

And Al Qasimi made it a UAE championship double, finishing fourth overall to overtake Aussie and Ron Cremen and clinch the Middle East Group N title for production cars.

After recording the fastest times in 13 of the event's 16 special stages, the Arab World's No. 1 driver was first back to the Rally HQ, at the Al Bustan Rotana Hotel, seven minutes and 35 seconds clear of his closest challenger, UAE's Rashid bin Ghurab.

"It was a very good rally for me," he said. "I love the new stages. They made it very easy for people to go and watch. I'm very happy

for Ford that we won six out of six events this year to keep our 100 percent record through the season."

Ghurab completed a memorable performance to finish second, powering Sulayem's former Ford Escort Cosworth ahead, of Al Qasimi in the tenth stage and then moving past Michel Saleh in the 14th stage for the runners-up spot.

While Sulayem cruised to victory, Ghurab set the fastest times on two stages today, increasing the pressure on Saleh as the route took them from Dubai Creek and the Marmon district into the Al-Dhaid area for the first time.

And as Ghurab turned up the heat, he snatched second place when the UAE-based Lebanese driver suffered a puncture and stalled his engine after a titanic struggle.

There was no catching Sulayem, whose Ford World Rally Car remained in total control to earn his 46th international victory, enhancing his status as the world's most successful driver in FIA championship rallying.

Dubai Ports Authority and Jhel Ali Free Zone were the

official sponsors, with Danka Kodak official suppliers of photocopyers, and Emirates computers official suppliers of computers. Ghazal Al Wadi Towing Services (GTS) also provided vital support.

The biggest smile of the day belonged to Al Qasimi, who finished one place ahead of his season-long rival Cremen in fifth to clinch the Group N title and complete a UAE clean sweep of the leading four places in the Dubai event.

Trailing the 1996 Group N champion by just one point going into the Dubai Rally, Qasimi took advantage of home knowledge to finish with a comfortable six-minute cushion and decide one of the most dramatic battles ever seen for a Middle East rally title.

"I'm very pleased; winning my first Middle East title is a new feeling," said Qasimi. There was high drama in the chase for the region's Formula Two crown, with Near-chous overcoming horrendous mechanical problems to crawl across the finish line to clinch the title.

Second day casualties included Austrian veteran Rudi Stohl, who was forced

to retire on the day's second stage when his Audi engine burst into flames.

The historic cars' only second-day starter, a Ford GT 350 driven by Paul Kane, battled its way to the finish to pave the way for the new category to blossom in next season's Middle East Championship.

Results:

1. M. Sulayem / R. Morgan (UAE/TRL) Ford Escort Cosworth 2:18:36
2. R. Ghurab / TBA (UAE) Ford Escort Cosworth 2:26:11
3. M. Saleh / A. Al-Ghaziri (UAE) Toyota Celica 2:27:03
4. A. Al Qasimi / G. Khoury (UAE) Mitsubishi Lancer 2:30:50
5. R. Cremen / J. Rabbet (AUS) Mitsubishi Lancer 2:37:02
6. B. Bustami / A. Al-Hasan (HKI) Mitsubishi Lancer 2:48:10
7. R. Feghali / S. Steir (RL) Seat Ibiza 3:06:15
8. S. Steir / G. Reek (UAE) Ford Sierra Cosworth 3:08:03
9. M. Osman / TBA (UAE) Mitsubishi Galant 3:11:59
10. F. Bustami / J. Orfali (HKI) Toyota Celica 3:12:34

Tunisia's Esperance completes sweep, wins Cup Winners Cup

LUANDA—Tunisian club Esperance completed a record clean sweep of African titles after drawing 1-1 with Angolan military outfit Premiero Agosto Sunday to lift the Cup Winners Cup.

The North Africans won the final 4-2 on aggregate following a 3-1 first-leg victory in Tunis two weeks ago.

Profligate scorer Makelc N'silulu put Premiero ahead after 42 minutes at a packed Miedela Stadium and Miedela levelled with three minutes left.

Esperance won the 1994 Champions Cup (now League), 1995 Super Cup and 1997 African Football Confederation (CAF) Cup.

Football Roundup

Brief reports of German first division soccer matches

Eintracht Frankfurt (1) Schalke 04 (2)
Dutch defender Marco van Hoogdalem put struggling Schalke in front in the 21st minute and playmaker Sven Knetisch added another goal in the 38th minute.

With 10 minutes left, new signing Jan-Age Fjorof, helped by a blunder from Schalke's young goalkeeper Oliver Reck, reduced the arrears for promoted Eintracht.

Bayer Leverkusen (3) VfL Wolfsburg (0)

Germany striker Ulf Kirsten opened the scoring from close range in the 21st minute and made it 2-0 with a header from a corner five minutes later. Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto raced into the box to score the home side's third goal nine minutes into the second half. Leverkusen joined Bayern on 35 points and seized the league lead on goal difference.

VfB Stuttgart (3) Hamburg SV (1)

Hamburg SV took the lead with a powerful shot from 20 meters by midfielder and captain Bernd Hollerbach in the 37th minute. Nigerian striker Jonathan Akpoborie levelled just before halftime. He scored two more goals in the second half to end a worrying string of five league matches without defeat, just one day after coach Winfried Schaefer resigned.

Nuremberg (2) Hansa Rostock (2)
Hansa Rostock managed a draw thanks to a goal from Nigerian Victor Agali four minutes from time.

Two goals from Macedonian Sasa Ciric in the 21st and 42nd minutes respectively gave Nuremberg a 2-0 lead. Frenchman Abder Ramdane reduced the arrears shortly before halftime.

VfL Bochum (2) Bayern Munich (2)

Bayern snatched a draw with a penalty by Thomas Strunz two minutes from time. Bochum had taken a 2-1 lead a few seconds earlier through veteran striker Stefan Kuntz, also from the penalty spot.

Bochum opened the scoring after three minutes with a thunderous shot from just outside the penalty area by Norben Hofmann. But Bayern levelled just seconds before the break through a spectacular volley from 18 metres by striker Carsten Jancker.

Brief reports of Italian first division soccer matches

Lazio (1) Juventus (0)

Juventus were facing their first real crisis for years, after the champions suf-

fered their third league defeat in four games in a 1-0 home upset against Lazio.

Juventus fell seven points behind league leaders Fiorentina, raising major doubts about the Turin club.

Juventus, who have not won a league game since November 1 and appear lost without injured striker Alessandro Del Piero, were floored by an 81st minute strike by Lazio's Chilean ace Marcelo Salas.

Portuguese midfielder Sergio Conceicao sent over a free-kick, Salas chested the ball down and lashed it past Morgan De Sanctis, Juventus' second reserve goalkeeper making his debut in the Serie A.

Lazio, who beat Juventus 2-1 in last summer's Italian Super Cup in Turin, are the only club to have won at the Delle Alpi stadium this year.

The result will also be a hammer blow to Juventus' confidence as they prepare for Wednesday's European Champions League tie against Rosenborg, and to their faint chance of reaching the quarter-finals.

Inter Milan (1) Vicenza (1)

Inter Milan made a miserable start to their first league match under new coach Mircea Lucescu, conceding a penalty in the 21st minute when skipper Giuseppe Bergomi and Francesco Colonnese stopped Pasquale Luiso.

Luiso converted the spot-kick, although his team had already missed five scoring chances as Inter struggled to coordinate their game - managing only one shot at goal in the first half.

However, there was no shortage of drama in the second with Inter's Nigerian defender Turibo West, furious at being substituted by Frenchman Mickael Silvestre in the 51st minute, pulling off his jersey and throwing it at the new Romanian coach.

Vicenza had defender Nicola Diliso sent off for a second bookable offense in the 65th minute but Inter had Chilean Ivan Zamorano dismissed just three minutes later for kicking Massimo Beghetto.

Ronaldo ended a 23-day league absence by coming on as a substitute for French midfielder Benoit Calet. And it was Lucescu's substitutes who saved the day in the second minute of injury-time.

Ronaldo struck a free-kick against the Vicenza wall, the ball ran free and Silvestre slotted it home - despite furious claims from the home side that the Frenchman was offside. Vicenza finished with nine on the field, Marco Schenardi getting his marching orders in the fourth minute of injury time.

AC Milan (3) Udinese (0)

AC Milan coach Alberto Zaccheroni and German striker Oliver Bierhoff meanwhile celebrated a resounding victory over their old club, Udinese.



Leonardo, who later went off to a standing ovation, also eased the personal crisis faced by Bierhoff, the Serie A's top scorer with Udinese last season - setting up his first league goal since October 4.

Elsewhere, Venezia beat Cagliari with an own goal, Piacenza drew 0-0 with Empoli and Salernitana finished 2-2 with Bari.

Fiorentina are three points clear at the top, ahead of AS Roma and Parma, who all played on Saturday.

Florentina (1) Bologna (0)
Gabriel Batistuta's 12th goal in 12 league games was enough to give the league leaders a vital 1-0 win and end Bologna's run of 16 unbeaten matches. Giuseppe Signori and Swede Kenneth Andersson both came close to giving Bologna a point.

AS Roma (5) Perugia (1)

Roma were trailing at the interval but hit five in the second half to end the day as the highest scoring side in the Italian first division this season. Teenager Daniele Conti scored his first goal in Serie A but also earned his second dismissal of the season after 66 minutes.

French first division reports

Sochaux (0) Lorient (1)

Lorient, which has a better road record than its home mark, won for the third time to leap two places off the bottom. Yannick Fischer scored early on after Sochaux's ex-Paris St. Germain goalie failed to hold a free kick on an icy pitch in a steady snowstorm.

RC Lens (3) Strasbourg (0)

Czech Vladimir Smicer put Lens, beaten 1-0 at Bordeaux last weekend, ahead shortly after the interval. Ghana midfielder Alex Nyarko followed five minutes later with his first goal for the club and Elot Wagneau completed the rout with his seventh of the season.

Paris St. Germain (0) Toulouse (0)

PSG strikers Marco Simone and Adailton both put the ball in the net in the second half but their efforts disallowed for being offside. Toulouse goalkeeper Teddy Richert saved well from right back Jimmy Algerino.

Nantes (2) Bastia (0)
Striker Frederic Da Rocha scored twice in the second half to give Nantes their second successive victory against 10-man Bastia. The Corsicans had midfielder Patrick Moreau sent off in first half injury time for a dangerous tackle on winger Olivier Monterhio.

Montpellier (2) Le Havre (0)

Veteran defender Franck Silvestre scored two superb goals in the space of 11 minutes. He headed a Laurent Robert free kick over the goalkeeper, and under the bar, then curled a free kick over the wall and inside the near top corner.

Metz (0) Rennes (0)

Rennes goalkeeper Christophe Revault denied Metz with some good saves and saw the home side's final effort from Yugoslav Vlatko Lukic hit the post.

Monaco (3) Nancy (0)

France's David Trezeguet struck his fourth double of the season for Monaco with goals either side of halftime to take his tally to eight. Nigerian Victor Ikpeba scored in between from the rebound after Nancy keeper Frederic Roux denied Trezeguet a hat-trick.

AJ Auxerre (1) Olympique Marseille (1)

Stephane Carnot saved Auxerre's unbeaten home record with a late penalty equalizer. Marseille's Daniel Bravo was sent off for handball after he appeared to chest the ball down on the line. Laurent Blanc, who captained Auxerre to the league title in 1996, put Marseille in front on the hour.

Olympique Lyon (2) Girondins Bordeaux (1)

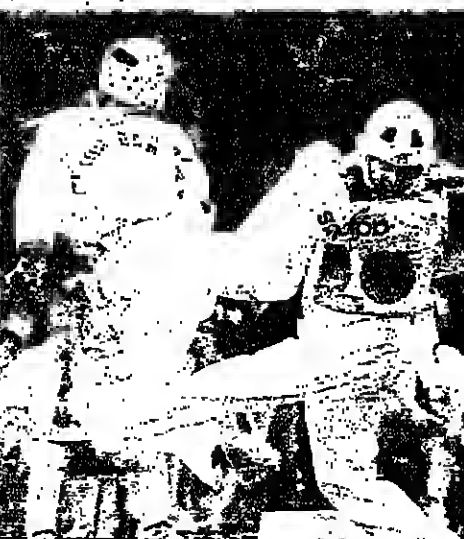
Lyon, scoring in the second half through captain Alain Cavaglia and Vikash Dhorasoo, managed a remarkable double in successive home matches by again beating the team at the top of the table after victory over Marseille two weeks ago.

Bordeaux, which pulled one back through top scorer Sylvain Wilford, retained its lead on goal difference over Marseille to become autumn champions.

Pan-Arab Games update 15-31 August, 1999



Park Hee-Kang of Korea blocks a kick from Jordan's Mohammed Flah in the Pin Weight men's taekwondo quarter-finals of the 13th Asian Games. Flah was defeated at the end.



Jordanian athletes marching on

● Thirty-eight Jordanian athletes in 11 individual games will participate in the Asian Games starting this week in Bangkok, Thailand. Jordan will participate in the fields of Judo, Karate, Taekwondo, Swimming, Boxing, Athletics, Weight-lifting, Bowling, Squash, Gymnastics and shooting. Jordanians are hoping that some athletes would clinch medals in Bangkok including the golden Boxer Mohammed Abu Khadejah and some of the Taekwondo team members.

Jordanian Football in action once again

● Jordan's Football National Team is ready for action. The team will participate in the 1st Arab Cup indoor competitions. The Arab Cup started this week in Egypt. Jordan was placed in Group B with Algeria, Morocco and Libya. Other groups included Egypt, Somalia, Palestine and Sudan. Jordan's National Football team—the Pan Arab Games title-holder—failed in moving to Arab Cup Semi-Finals held in Doha, three months ago.

Hamdan threatens to resign from Asian Federation

● Sari Hamdan, president of the Jordanian Handball Federation threatened to resign from the Asian Federation if his national team does not receive the proper treatment having qualified for the next World Cup to be held in Egypt next year. "There was a complete disregard of internal regulations. If that continues, we have no choice but to freeze membership in the Asian Handball Federation (AHF)," Hamdan said at a press conference. Jordan was disqualified from reaching the World Cup Finals after crossing off Bahrain's results in the West Asian qualifiers held in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. Kuwait replaced Jordan and joined Saudi Arabia to participate in the next World Cup.

Fokasheen to be sacked

● Jordanian Football Federation is about to cancel the contract of the Yugoslavian coach Fokasheen. This is because the national team has failed to win the latest matches for the Arab Cup. Fokasheen has already earned more than \$60,000 for the last three months for services rendered in training the national team. However, the team showed poor performance and failed to move to the semi-finals of the late Arab Cup held in Doha.

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Celebrating three decades since the creation of the computer 'mouse':

Man's right-hand tool

THE MOUSE is the human interface device designed to provide a natural, intuitive link between people and computers. The mouse was created three decades ago by a scientist called Engelbert and members of his historic team who, on 9 December, 1968, presented the first public demonstration of the computer mouse.

It operated with early versions of a graphical user interface (GUI) displaying editing, integrated text and graphics, hyper-documents, and two-way video conferencing at the American Federation of Information Processing Societies' Fall Joint Computer Conference in San Francisco.

The mouse was first adopted massively by Apple Computer, then by other companies like Hewlett-Packard and IBM.

Today, the mouse has developed enormously and leads the pointing devices. In fact, today there are tens of types of new pointing devices that are based on the same innovation of the mouse. Track-balls, track-points (in notebooks), wireless pointers



and many more devices have emerged that are making it even easier for people to utilize the large potential of the information age. Every development in the field of computers since the early nineteen eighties has been driven, one way or another, by the mouse.

In 1985, as the mouse began to gain broader acceptance, a classic square-shaped three-button mouse was introduced.

Today, leading mouse manufacturers like Logitech produce approximately six mice per second. Graphical User Interfaces like the Mac Operating System and Windows would be impossible without the mouse. The Internet's Web interface would be difficult to imagine today without the mouse.

Even within specialized functions of graphic arts and publishing, the mouse has become an artist's pen, which slides on a pad and provides all sorts of powers previously never available to artists and designers. Some mouse manufacturers believe that they are still beginning to discover the richness of the interface and the significance of mouse technologies. It was Doug Engelbart's invention that provided a human-computer interface and its potential that have significantly shaped our corporate mission—to enhance the computing experience by continuously expanding and enhancing the interface between the analog world where we live and the digital world of information.

V.90 modems speed-up access

THE PROBLEM of 56Kbps standards is becoming a thing of the past in the world of modems.

Finally, it looks like V.90 modems are set to solve user problems and deliver the speediest performance to be expected from a dial-up modem.

A V.90—which is also a 56K modem—is the best option for swift surfing and zippy downloads.

With xDSL and other high-speed modems on the horizon, this

could be the last dial-up modem type you'll ever need.

Future modems will depend on software more than hardware which will change the nature of communication protocols. This is necessary to beat the bottlenecks of speed that dial-up modems cannot surpass.

As communication infrastructures develop, so will the modems. For now, V.90 modems are one way to get through to the next stage.



Internet security & Web scaling from CISCO

FEW ORGANIZATIONS are aware of how to connect to the Internet safely or how a company's Internet costs relate to its network infrastructure.

Cisco Systems is playing a leading role in educating organizations all over the Middle East regarding Internet security and web scaling.

As more and more companies connect to the Internet and plan to participate in e-commerce or make company intranets available to external users, the need for scalable, secure Internet solutions increases.

Internet awareness is sweeping the Middle East as businesses discover the benefits of

doing business on the Internet.

Any organization planning to connect to the Internet must consider several key issues: performance, scalability and security. Cisco Systems offers a range of integrated network solutions to connect local area networks—or intranets—to the Internet safely and cost-effectively.

As business usage of the Internet becomes more widespread, network performance also becomes a corporate priority. Network users that cannot connect to the Internet effectively can waste a great deal of company time and longer download times can translate into higher communications costs.

Cisco Semioar is also dedicated to Web Scaling, which aims to ensure that your Internet connections and websites can cope with the traffic.

'Caching', 'load balancing' and 'global scalability' are all topics covered in the seminar. Cisco Systems relies heavily on business conducted over the Internet and the company is expected to sell more than \$5 billion worth of products and services over the Internet this year, or more than 50 percent of its turnover.

Through automating sales, information delivery and business processes using the Internet, Cisco has also saved more than \$500 million in costs.

News update

Microsoft Office 2000

When Office 2000 hits the retail shelves in the second quarter of 1999, it will contain the biggest upgrade yet to Microsoft Corp's office application suite. It will also be the first version that's thoroughly integrated with the Internet and will include a new version of Microsoft's Internet Explorer Web browser—a component already tightly integrated with Windows. More than any other software package, Office 2000 blurs the lines between the operating system, the browser, and your applications.

When the final product is ready to ship, a Standard version of the Office 2000 suite

will also be available, containing only the first four of the applications listed above. A Small Business version includes Excel, Outlook, Publisher, Word, and small-business tools, and a Professional version adds Access, PowerPoint, and PowerDraw.

Oracle Y2K solution within two months

Oracle announced additions to its Year 2000 packages, which deliver effective solutions to public organizations.

Oracle is extending the availability of its general-purpose bundle, which meets specialized requirements. The product is called FastForward Public

Sector Financials Y2K

The package enables companies to implement Y2K-compliant accounting systems within 60 days.

AOL-Netscape deal affects Microsoft trial

Microsoft is using America Online's (AOL) purchase of Netscape as part of its defense against the Justice Department case, as Microsoft believes that such deals strengthen its competition and make monopoly unlikely. Also, Sun's recent agreement with AOL which even puts more Microsoft competitors in one trench! The coming weeks will show what all this means for the case.

A 'ToughBook' you can drive over!

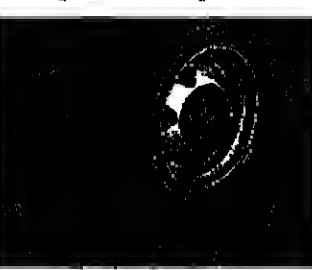
PANASONIC HAS introduced an amazing notebook computer range called the ToughBook, which can actually bounce off the floor without being damaged.

It is resistant to fluids spilling all over it—there is no problem with pouring a whole pot of coffee on the screen and keyboard.

In fact, it could be run over by a large car and still survive. It is simply amazing. While other manufacturers are trying to make their notebooks thinner and lighter, Panasonic introduced the ToughBook in a bulky, suitcase-like cover.

With the case closed, it can

challenge all the forces of nature. It comes with 32MB of RAM, expandable to 96MB. It includes a graphics accelerator and offers the normal selection of ports. The ToughBook offers an impressive battery life of 2



hours and 51 minutes! The Panasonic ToughBook comes in a number of models including the CF-25, 35, 45 and 71. The CF-71, which is the top of the range, includes an Intel Mobile Pentium II processor, a full magnesium alloy case and handle, spill resistant keyboard and touch-pad and a shock-mounted hard disk drive. Of course, all models have the same shock-resistance and alloy case.

The ToughPad has to be seen to be appreciated. It represents a new wave in notebooks. Whether it's type will catch on or not remains to be seen.

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SCRAPBOOK Arab-Muslim stereotypes in 'their eyes'!

By Rasheed Al Roussan
Special to The Star

IMAGINE THIS scene from Anthony Mingnella's *The English Patient*: A German soldier orders a Muslim nurse to cut off the fingers of a traitor. see.

"You when someone commits adultery in Islam, they kill him. Or do they cut his hand? No, I think they do that when you steal, right?" says the German soldier. Another scene takes place when a British soldier ridicules an Algerian worker, where he offers him food as if he was a dog.

Now, try to picture *True Lies* (1994), which is among James Cameron's famous movies, where terrorism is the core of the movie. Arnold Schwarzenegger is the anti-terrorist hero who devours Muslim Iranians in a bloody battle of virtue!

Now try to go back with your memory a few years ago, where Bruce Willis shares the same heroic destiny of saving the world from a Middle East terrorist group in the sequel *Die Hard III*.

Since the release of David Linn's *Lawrence of Arabia*, the Arab character became interwoven through a series of films, which portrayed the Arab or Muslim psychology as a shallow, and hateful personality.

Moreover, everybody remembers James Cameron's masterpiece *Titanic*. The striking high-tech animation, the actors and the story itself took the world by surprise and appreciation. However, the director seemed to have a weak memory about the truth of what really happened on the famous ship. Those who died following the American dream were from all over the world: English, American, Irish, etc. Despite the fact that more than 300 Lebanese lost their lives after the *Titanic* embraced the blue depths of the ocean, Cameron wasn't interested at all in showing that. Instead, he had two Arabic couples trying to read a sign saying "Exit".

Hollywood didn't stop at that point. Walt Disney's *Aladdin* (1992) is no exception. The film starts with a short song by an Arabian bedouin, wondering in the desert. "Oh, I come from a land, from a far away place where caravan camels roam. Where they cut off your ears if they don't like your face. It's barbaric! But hey, it's home." The film starts with a universal stereotype: that Arabs are evil buccaneers, who cut off people's ears and God knows what else!

Walt Disney's films are for everyone, but they are specially targeted for children, who often build their own comprehension of reality through didactic and entertaining movies like *Aladdin*. Nevertheless, truth is relevant, and it seems that the West is keen on showing the Arabian character in a twisted manner. *Malcolm X* is another living example. The black Muslim activist is hated by everyone. He was a Muslim because he was black, and not because he was a true believer!

Furthermore, Hollywood's dictatorship has always succeeded in wiping off any attempt to produce a movie about the Arab's struggle in the Middle East.

On the other hand, Zionism prevailed successfully in Steven Spielberg's Academy Award winner, *Schindler's List*. The Holocaust survivors were glad to be remembered again, while Palestinian, Lebanese and Iraqi children were put on the margin of the world's agenda.

The movie *The Palestinian*, is among the unsuccessful attempts to shed light on the Palestinians' struggle for freedom. The film, was produced in the '70s, and acted by the famous Vanessa Redgrave, a leading British stage and motion-picture star.

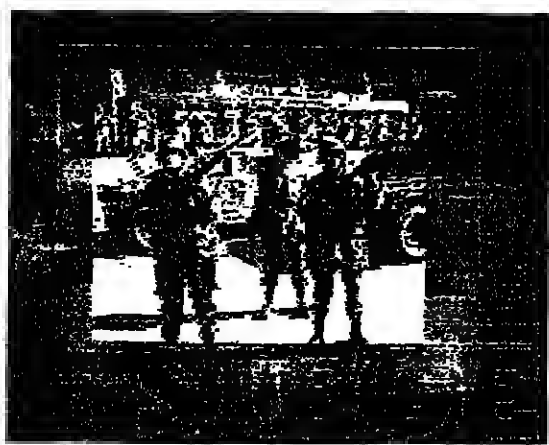
Redgrave's political activism has attracted considerable attention, particularly because of her controversial speech at the 1977 Academy Awards ceremony, in which she condemned Israel's foreign policies. By that time, she began to lose her popularity and major roles in films, which isn't really surprising!

Moreover, director Edward Zwick's latest movie *The Siege* is becoming the talk of the town. Bruce Willis, Annette Bening, and Denzel Washington are the watchdogs for peace in New York City. This time, Hollywood crossed the red line. Muslim Jihad arrives to the US, attacks Brooklyn, blows up Times Square and kidnaps school children!

The film caused outrage among Arabs all over. It seems—according to the Hollywood perception—we cut off ears, kill people, blow up buses, kidnap children, and all in the name of Islam! And who are we supposed to be against in these films? We are against people from the US army, who fought a saga of virtuous wars like Vietnam and the Gulf war! All under the name of peace and harmony.

Through the years, the religious identity of the Arabs has been closely reexamined under the microscopic lenses of American cinema. At the end of the day, you find yourself overused with Arab stereotypes.

Nevertheless, we remain mesmerized by the magic of Hollywood, and we tend to forget that one of Hollywood's spectacles today is our own identity! ■



The old city of Salt

A fragrance of history

By Rana Hadad
Special to The Star

SALT. A beautiful city—on the outskirts of Amman—embraces a rich culture that is deeply embedded in its long history. One of the most distinctive aspects are its exquisite old and traditional houses which narrate the past.

Standing next to one of these houses, you can actually smell the historical fragrance that lies within—simple but unique houses that makes you long for a break away from the rush of the big city.

The Star toured a similar 150-year-old house. Once you set foot in the door, you enter a large area, resembling a courtyard that has a hand mill for grinding grain, which sits waiting for the hands of women.

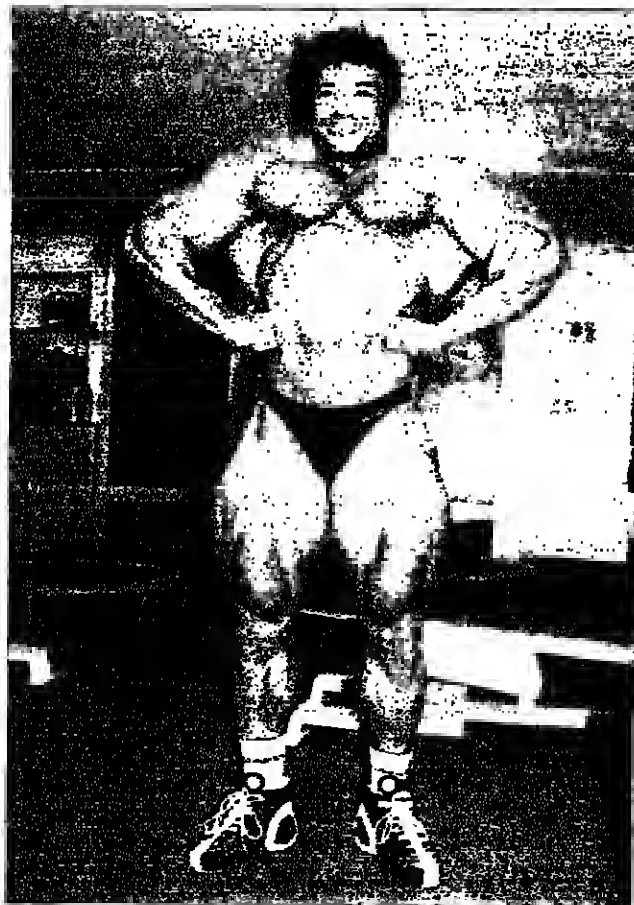
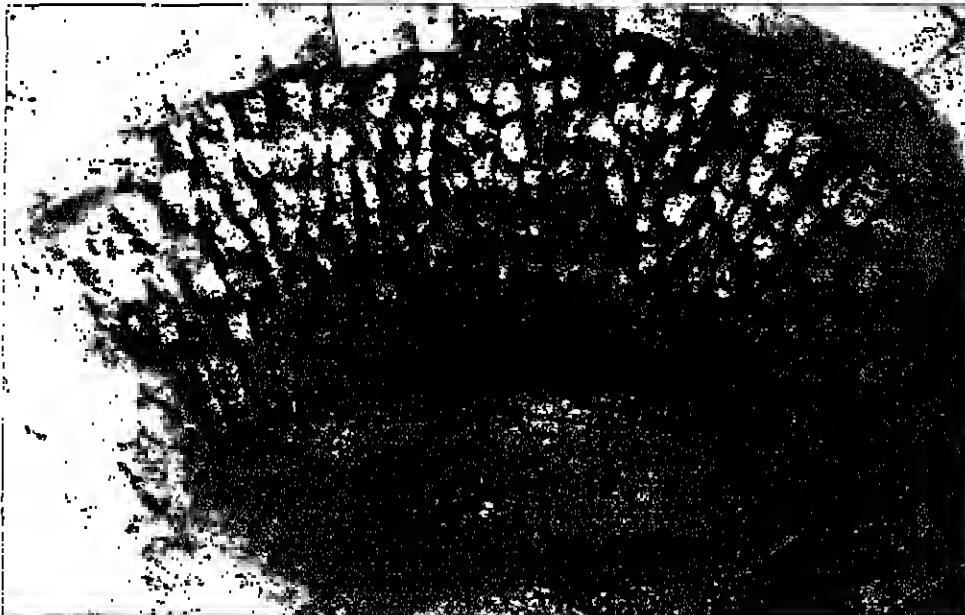
Across, you find a large room built from huge yellow stones, mold and wood brought from the surrounding forests. Our forefathers used these stones in the same way they found them, however, few retouches were added.

"I raised 14 children in this single room" said the friendly lady of the house as she welcomed us. "On top of that we used to have guests who would stay with us for



days on end," she added. According to Umm Naser, people in the old days were

more friendly and social, relatives and neighbors saw each other daily, taking turns



By Farah Qasem
Star Staff Writer

HE IS a hero. With an anonymous vote of confidence, he was selected as a top candidate in the body building competition that was recently held in Turkey.

Mustafa Hasanin, the undefeated hero, still considers himself as an amateur athlete, but by next year he will turn professional.

"I am preparing myself for the forthcoming 9th Pan-Arab Games which will take place in Amman in 1999," says the Jordanian hero while cuddling his son Hamza, a three-year-old.

"My victory in Turkey opened the door wide open for my professional career," he says. However, there are not many body builders around the world who turn professional. This is because of the intensive

efforts that are required to take care of one's body.

However, in Hasanin's case, several factors have worked together to make him reach the limelight.

"My marriage helped me a great deal to reach this level, my wife, son and even my one-year-old daughter Maysoon are very supportive," he said.

In the last championship in Istanbul, 76 countries took part in the game, and despite the intense competition, Hasanin got the approval of all nine judges for his heavy weight lifting performance as he dazzled them by the harmony of his muscular body.

"My training is divided into two periods in the day," he said. "The two-to-four training hours depends on the competitions I take part in, at the time, I cancel all engagements to concen-

trate on the intensive training program for the competition."

The year 1992 was a glorious one for Hasanin since he received important international titles. The Europe Masters and Mr Universe were the most prestigious titles he won. This is in addition to the Arab Cup titles he obtained in 1993, '94 and '95.

To keep his body in shape, Hasanin follows a strict

nutritional diet to make sure that he gets 7,000 calories everyday. "I eat seven meals daily, they must have all the neces-



A view of Salt

to visit one another. "Men sat together on one side of the room and women on the other, eating dried figs and grapes prepared for the occasion" added the old woman.

The large room which serves as a bedroom and a saloon was the only living quarters in the house. There is a metal object hung down from the ceiling to keep the food fresh.

The bathroom on the other

band, is usually separate from the living quarters. Each house has a pet where chicken and sheep are grown. A storage room of two meters deep and a meter wide where people used to store sugar, rice, lentil and flour for every day use. It is a must in every house. In addition, water was stored in water basins.

Life in the old days was simple despite its harshness.

According to Umm Naser, the daily routine was always planned.

"Women and men used to get up early every morning," she said. They would start by baking bread for their husbands to have breakfast before leaving to the fields.

"Later, the women of the village would gather to collect water from the main supply," said the 80-year-old Umm Naser.

Collecting water was not an easy job for those women, since they had to walk a long distance before arriving to the water spring. Water was then stored for two to three days in the water basin.

Each would then head to her house to cook for the whole family. "Cooking has always been a challenge, since you have to be creative and come up with different and delicious dishes for the family," added Umm Naser. The main food included rice, lentils, tomatoes and other vegetables. Milk was heavily used in the cooking. However, meat was a luxury, eaten on special occasions.

Following the routine jobs around the house, women would take some time for weaving. "We used to weave beautiful and colorful plates made from straw which were used for different purposes," said the old woman.

This was how our grandfathers lived, a life full of simplicity away from all the complications and worries of today's busy life. Umm Naser said her farewells with a smile. On her face and retired back to her house, leaving us dazzled with the beauty of a life that once existed. ■



Photos by Mahmoud Shawkat

Jordanian body builder enthuses world with his muscles



uted between vitamins and mineral salts.

"Above all, I need to sleep 8-9 hours a day to rest my body," the 32-year-old athlete pointed out.

The 120-kilogram athlete needs great care, that's why the champion practices other sports like jogging, boxing and swimming which gives the muscles the flexibility he needs.

After 12 years in this field, Hasanin, who is a resident in Austria, is considering returning home for good. But that won't be for at least another five years. Hasanin wants to try his hand at being a full-time professional body builder.

Body building in Jordan is improving in stable and confident steps. In 1964, we had just one club for this sport in Jordan. However, in 1990 the number reached 20 clubs. "Right now, there are 220 clubs around the Kingdom, and many

youngsters are joining in," he pointed out.

Hasanin is very pleased by growing interest of Jordan's youths in this sport, and he expects a bright future for many. "The appropriate age to begin practicing the sport of body building is 15 years, and I guarantee that after five years of training and continuous efforts those competitors will become international heroes," the champion believes.

After his success in Turkey, Hasanin was officially and publicly received by many Jordanians. His fans were very eager to meet him, and waited for his return at the airport. "I am thrilled to hear that many young athletes in the Arab countries consider me an example they wish to follow, this is a big responsibility, which I am willing to take," Hasanin promises. ■